Daily Report

Latin America

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CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.
An Ω indicates a Foreign Media Note.

CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Castro Addresses Sixth UPEC Congress *[Havana TV]* 1
Fidel Castro Gives 35th Anniversary Speech *[Havana Radio]* 10
Raul Castro Congratulates People, Armed Forces *[Havana Radio]* 14
Vietnamese Congratulate Castro on Anniversary *[Havana Radio]* 14
Provincial Plenum Letter of Commitment to Castro *[Havana Radio]* 14
Economic Affairs Commission Chairman Interviewed *[Havana Radio]* 15
Fidel Castro Inaugurates Sierra Mar Hotel *[Havana TV]* 15
'Alarming Official Figures' on State of Economy *[AFP]* 16
Official Daily Assures 'Revolution Will Prevail' *[Madrid EFE]* 17
Raul Castro Continues Visit to Western Army *[Havana TV]* 17
Raul Castro Attends FAR Promotion Ceremony *[Havana TV]* 18
Chile Considers Diplomatic Ties *[Havana Radio]* 18
Envoy in Nicaragua on Reforms, U.S. Blockade *[Managua BARRICADA 31 Dec]* 18

Inter-Caribbean Affairs

Summary of 1993 Regional Developments *[CANA]* 19

Haiti

Bazin Seeks Peaceful, Fair, 'Haitian' Solution *[Port-au-Prince Radio]* 21
Cedras Visits Gonaives Garrison *[Port-au-Prince Radio]* 21
CONACOM: 'Haiti Needs a Truce' *[Port-au-Prince Radio]* 21

MEXICO

Chiapas Crisis

Political Parties Express Concern *[Mexico City Radio]* 22
'Tense' Situation in San Cristobal Reported *[Mexico City Radio]* 22
Vatican Offers To Mediate *[Mexico City Radio]* 23
Bishop Denies Ties *[Mexico City Radio]* 23
Bishops Reaffirm Willingness To Mediate *[Mexico City Radio]* 23
Salinas Comments; Advocates Dialogue *[Mexico City Radio]* 23
Guatemala Institutes 'Strict' Border Security *[Mexico City TV]* 24
Rebels Said To Reject Talks With Government *[AFP]* 24
Ex-Clandestine People's Party Dissociates Self From Rebels *[Madrid EFE]* 25
Government Reports 'Greater Calm' in Chiapas *[Mexico City Radio]* 26
Armed Forces Reinforce Troops by 6,000 *[AFP]* 26
Government Admits 'Significant' Underdevelopment *[Mexico City Radio]* 26
Rebels Maintaining Presence in at Least 5 Towns *[AFP]* 27
Said To Withdraw *[Madrid EFE]* 27
Peasant Organizations Reject Violence *[Mexico City Radio]* 28
Chiapas Governor Requests Army Intervention *[Mexico City Radio]* 28
Armed Forces Retake Town *[AFP]* 28
Two Hundred Said Killed, 500 Wounded *[Madrid EFE]* 29

CENTRAL AMERICA

Guatemala

Army Spokesperson Hints of URNG Role in Mexican Rebellion *[Guatemala City TV]* 30
URNG Rejects Army Report *[AFP]* 30

Nicaragua

* Failures, Successes in Factories Noted *[BARRICADA 28 Nov]* 30
* Economists View Impact of FTA *[BARRICADA 6 Dec]* 31

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina

Menem Rules Out Justicialist, Radical Coalition in 1995 *[BUENOS AIRES HERALD 2 Jan]* 32
New Defense Ministry Under Secretaries Installed *[NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS]* 32

Bolivia

Danish Development Minister Arrives To Discuss Cooperation *[La Paz TV]* 32
* Head of New Secretariat Discusses Goals *[PRESENCIA 12 Nov]* 33

Brazil

Article Views President's 'Rebelliousness' *[ISTOE 22 Dec]* 37
Drug Traffickers Invade Police Precinct, Rescue Inmates *[Rio de Janeiro TV]* 40

Chile

Ambassador to Moscow Returns, Offers Resignation *[Santiago Radio]* 40

Colombia

Governor Assures Agreement Limits U.S. Troop Activities *[Santa Fe de Bogota TV]* 41

Ecuador

Roundup of Economic Developments Through 3 Jan *[Quito Radio]* 42

Peru

President Promotes 23 Army Colonels to General *[Madrid EFE]* 42
Roundup of Economic Developments Through 3 Jan *[Lima TV]* 42

Venezuela

Rival Gangs Clash in Sabaneta Jail; 100 Killed *[Caracas TV]* 43

Cuba

Castro Addresses Sixth UPEC Congress

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[Speech by President Fidel Castro closing the Sixth Congress of the Union of Cuban Journalists, UPEC, at the Convention Center in Havana on 24 December—recorded]

[Text] In view of the late hour and the fact that this session has lasted for almost 15 hours of intense activity—and, in my opinion, truly productive work—I am very glad to have spoken at diverse moments, because this gives me the opportunity to be as brief as possible now.

I take responsibility for what I have said, at least for everything I have said, and I do not ask you for any kind of discretion. I believe that I spoke both carefully and freely. This time I am not going to ask for any discretion at all. I believe that regarding what [Politburo member Carlos] Lage said—he presented more specific data—it would be have to be thought through a bit more; but I think that, in general, it can also be reported [words indistinct] that material but, I repeat, we have to see again in writing what kinds of things are more or less fitting to be reported or not. [Sighs]

I have already expressed my opinion of the debates. The truth is that we all feel pleased with the development of the congress. We are happy, we are very happy. We truly feel committed to this congress.

Many important ideas and concepts have been debated. Marti has been mentioned on several occasions. I was thinking about Marti's words and truly believe that he was referring to the media in general. I believe he was referring to the media of his time, the U.S. media. I do not think he was referring to or describing the revolutionary media. The question I asked myself was: What would Marti do in these circumstances? How would Marti think? What would he say of the role of the media in these circumstances? What would he say of the revolutionary media?

I do not think that he would say anything different than you have said here, which will remain as important premises. It was evidenced here that your most important mission is to defend the Revolution. To defend the Revolution is to defend socialism. When we speak of this Revolution, I cannot think of it without socialism. They are inseparable.

I view the media as, let us say, a force, a formidable instrument of the Revolution. I see the media and think of Radio Rebelde in the Sierra Maestra. We are living during times that are no easier to endure than the Sierra Maestra days. We are living in more complex times, more complex than the ones in which we lived back then. I view the media as a force of enormous importance, a decisive force. They are truly a decisive force in this struggle we are waging, in which everything is at stake. We are not only putting our own work at stake, we are putting the work of all those generations that came before us at stake. We are also defending the inheritance of all those that will come after us. We have to see it from this point of view.

No doubts have been expressed here regarding the path of the Revolution; the Revolution has a leader, and the leader of the Revolution is the Communist Party of Cuba [PCC]. I believe that no one has disputed this idea. It is an essential principle. [Sighs] We are not living in normal times. It is not known when we will see normal times again. As was said here: Everything is susceptible to development, everything is susceptible to change. Remember that there were many people before us who thought of a revolution, social justice, equality, fraternity, and socialism. [Sighs] There was even the hope that the state would disappear someday, as would classes; that the state would disappear in a communist state. Today we see how far away a communist society is; how far away even the disappearance of the state is; how far away the disappearance of imperialism is. How long will we have to fight?

Almost 35 years have gone by since the triumph of the revolution, and many more since the struggle began. You can see that the conditions under which we must fight today are very difficult; you can see the difficult battle we must wage today. Therefore, I believe that the role of the party for a long time must be an important and essential role. The party must play a role in regard to our media.

Why do I say this? Well, it could be that the times in which we are living, the confusions that can occur, the current confusions, the issues being broached here could make some doubt the role of the party in regard to the media. I am not saying this because of you; I am saying this because of others who may have their doubts.

The Revolution must be directed by the party. Among the instruments of struggle, the media are an important instrument in the struggle. We discussed at length how the party should play that role in regard to the media.

We must also remember that our media are not privately owned. Let us say that the media are social property; they belong to the people. I believe some things will not be privatized, and the last thing we would privatize when socialism no longer existed would be the media. We know how the media work in the capitalist world. They have, simply put, their owners. The owners are the ones who rule the capitalist media. They are the ones making the decisions, the ones who appoint the directors, the ones who establish the political path. And something extremely hard and acknowledged by everyone: The international media belong to the international bourgeoisie.

The immense majority of the capitalist society media has a right-wing, reactionary character. Unfortunately, one

of the tragedies of our era is that the mass media are in the hands of the economically strongest forces—the wealthiest, essential, economic interests of those societies. I hear everyone say that, out of 15 or 20 newspapers, there are two or three that follow a fairly objective path; but the immense majority of the mass media is in the hands of the right-wing powers in the world. This is one of our tragedies, the fact that that mass media are used exhaustively against us.

This cannot serve as a model or example for us. Everything, in general, is marked by a commercial spirit. Those media have been allied to the forces that oppose socialism, progress, and the most progressive movements. Unfortunately, what we said of our media cannot be said of those media; those media are private property. We cannot state that they never tell a lie. We cannot state that they are always honest and objective in their reporting. One of the virtues of our media, ethics, cannot be ascribed to those media.

Logically, our media ought to be at the service of the people and the Revolution.I wanted to begin with this subject because it is an issue about which I harbor no doubts at all.

I mentioned this afternoon what I thought about the way our media ought to work. I said here that we had no fear whatsoever of the analysis of mistakes, of reporting bad news; rather we fear, for the reason I explained, having to omit reporting good news.

I am aware of the various debates and points of view and I believe nothing at all that has been said cannot be analyzed and debated. There is absolutely nothing regarding our media that cannot be improved or perfected. I believe that through an open discussion like the one we conducted here today we can truly attain our goals. I believe that, regarding the issue of relations between the party and the media, any type of problem between the party and the media can be solved. Any type of complaint that our journalists may have can be taken care of and can be resolved. As much as you like to provide it, the country needs the highest quality from the media. The country needs optimum work from the media, if it is possible to do optimum work. We do not have a congress, as we said earlier, every five years. I believe that the [Media] National Committee can meet with the PCC leadership, at the appropriate level, and I will be glad to participate also, whenever I have a chance, in that type of meeting to analyze any sort of problem. I believe that from this congress we should obtain greater attention to the media.

We should obtain better relations between the party and the media. This is fundamental. If we do not get the media to play an optimum role, then we will not win the battle of the special period. I do not see how we can win the battle of the special period without the efforts of the media, without the great ideological battle we must wage. We are truly involved in a great ideological battle. We cannot win this ideological battle with organization, conferences, the work of the members of the PCC and the Union of Young Communists, and the work of the mass organizations alone. The media must be in the front line of that battle. We need top quality media, high morale media, and media aware of the role they have to play in this struggle.

We have very serious problems. At a Central Committee meeting the other day, I was saying that no other generation that I can remember in the history of revolutions has had a harder or more difficult task than the one this generation has had to tackle. I cannot find a similar case in history.

I have found no other country facing a situation like the one we are facing. We are a small country in the hemisphere, confronting the strongest power in the world. It is not only powerful but arrogant, haughty, selfish, and relentless, and has for the past 35 years been trying to destroy us. It is a hegemonic power opportunistically attempting to crush us as quickly as possible, and even more quickly since the collapse of the socialist bloc. Our country is practically alone in this hemisphere, struggling under incredibly difficult economic conditions in times of crisis for the revolutionary movement, in times of crisis for the revolutionary ideology, in times when all means are being used to exult the values of capitalism; in times when capitalism has launched itself into new phases that we could now describe as total control of work, in times of the so-called globalization of economy. We who lost our allies; who are today more than ever suffering the effects of the blockade because we no longer have the support from abroad that we had for so many years; we who, based precisely on that support, built so many social and economic things that are today so difficult to maintain, cannot envision more difficult conditions.

We may have lost many things, but we have not lost our serenity, patriotism, revolutionary spirit, dignity, decorum, dignity, the memory of our heroes and our dead; we have not forgotten our memories of 1868 and the 10 years of war; we have not forgotten our memories of 1895 and the struggle of our people for approximately 100 years after the pseudoindependence. We have not lost our values. This is why the Revolution has been able to resist. There is no other way to explain it. I truly believe that in this area our country is writing a truly glorious page in history. We should all feel proud of what we are doing. Naturally, all these tremendous problems, the limitations, scarcity, and suffering experienced by our people today serve as a cultural medium to dishearten our people and weaken their faith. The domestic and external conditions promote all those political debates you were talking about, they promote the situation broached by our TRABAJADORES comrade when he said that today we are not working as we did when we had the support of almost all the people.

There is no doubt that the number of disheartened and pessimistic people must grow under these circumstances.

The number of people who defect or betray the fatherland also grows. As we said recently, it is easy to be revolutionary in easy times, but it is truly difficult to be a revolutionary during truly difficult times. Those who are disheartened and demoralized, those who defect and betray do not surprise me; however, I am truly amazed by the extraordinary number of people who remain firm, with high morale and strong faith. I have witnessed this in many places and I saw it here today [words indistinct] statements made. Truly admirable. What is even more admirable is the degree of patriotism and revolutionary spirit exhibited by our people. [applause] We do not ignore the fact that we have difficulties. We do not ignore the fact that there is a certain ideological deterioration. We do not ignore that, to a greater or lesser degree, there is a certain disciplinary deterioration.

For example, there are a few thousand teachers who are now performing tasks other than teaching. There are some teachers who have transportation problems and it is difficult for them to get to the school. There are some teachers whose families earn enough to cover expenses. However, more than 250,000 professors and teachers keep our education system intact. They work at the universities, schools, and daycare centers. They work everywhere. There are millions of people who work because it is an honor to work.

Only recently I was thinking about an article carried in an issue of TRABAJADORES. As a matter of fact, the TRABAJADORES crew is doing an excellent ideological job. The TRABAJADORES article discussed moral and material encouragement. In principle and theory, the article cannot be refuted. However, I kept telling myself that in practice, our workers are working out of a strictly moral sense of duty. They are motivated by their morale, honor, and patriotism. We are in no condition to provide material encouragement. We have no doubt that material incentives are good; however, we do not have the money to do this. Whenever we have the money to improve a collective, we do it. The contingents are proof of this. We paid more attention to the workers, improved their housing facilities, gave them work clothes, gave them food. Proof of this are the measures implemented in the agriculture sector. We had been implementing those measures in the past; however, they had been affected by the scarcity of supplies and other material. Further proof of this is the creation of the Basic Cooperative Production Units [UBPC's] where we wish to apply the principle that the worker will receive in proportion to the work he does. This is a socialist principle. Proof of this are the measures implemented to ensure the self-sufficiency of the UBPC, the land we are distributing throughout the country to ensure self-sufficiency. Much of this land is in isolated areas. These are things we are doing to enable the people to contribute through their work to improving the self-sufficiency situation. Wherever we can provide material incentives, we do. But the objective truth is that we have practically nothing material to give our workers.

It is truly admirable, even though it has been described as good, that you have admitted we have absenteeism. There has always been absenteeism. Today we have more of it. However, the objective truth is that there are millions of men and women in this country who are working and fulfilling their duties out of a sense of honor and patriotism. That is why I keep telling myself: The issue is not giving the workers moral and material encouragement, but rather, keeping their morale very high. If we do not keep the people's morale very high, we will not win this battle. I would say that at this moment the battle is at its worst moment. We can say we are facing a situation similar to the one we faced when the enemy soldiers were marching on Radio Rebelde and our territory was getting smaller. We are truly engulfed in a desperate struggle for survival, but we have an army, because the revolutionaries represent a real army. When I speak of the army, I am not speaking of the Armed Forces; I am speaking of the revolutionary people who represent a real army, capable of winning this battle if we know how to lead them. How do I see you, the journalists? I see you as commissars of the people in this battle. [applause]

Yes, we must reverse trends, we must reverse currents. We have not reversed currents yet. We must all struggle: party, government, organizations, and Armed Forces. Not a military Armed Forces, but an armed forces helping in the field of agriculture, as it is doing, and by cutting back on expenses. The Armed Forces has reduced its budget by 50 percent. Tens of thousands of soldiers are helping produce food, and we are not talking about self-sufficiency, which is one of the tasks we have been talking about.

The Interior Ministry forces are working with the people to fight the big battle against crime. That was also a dangerous trend that was making progress. Now we are seeing changes in this area. Lack of discipline is another dangerous trend we must reverse. Discouragement and doubt are two dangerous feelings that must be changed. We must win this battle with ideas. We must win this battle with the ideas of socialism, with the ideas of our socialism. Someone said that our socialism is ours. We could also say, as Marti said about wine: This wine may be sour, but it is our wine. If we want to be a bit hard on ourselves we could say: Our socialism is ours, but it is inefficient. I am not going to say that we are inefficient in all we do, but we have not been able to be efficient in everything, and we are inefficient in many ways. We cannot say that we have stopped copying. We have copied some things from socialist experiences. The socialist experience had some good points, but we also copied some of its bad experiences. That was unavoidable. Even though some of us were very allergic to the idea of copying the experiences of others, we did. In this case, we copied experiences from the Soviet Union, the socialist bloc, the first revolution in history. It was the first socialist revolution in history—some say the Mexican Revolution was the first—capable of carrying out great feats that were admired by the world, that influenced the world, that contributed to the process of

liberating the peoples of the world, that resisted imperialism for many years, that fought and defeated fascism at a tremendous cost in lives and sacrifice. It was only logical that this process would influence us. Many of our people went to school there. Many of our textbooks came from there. They advised us in many areas, and their advice was very important in many areas. For example, their advice in organizing our Armed Forces was very important. But then one day we realized that their ideas were not adequate for a country such as ours. Our country was confronting the United States. It was then that we drafted and established our doctrines. But they taught us military technique. We learned important lessons, but we also learned that those experiences could not be the doctrine of a small country confronting a colossus like the United States. We had to change some things and develop the idea of the war of all the people.

They influenced us in the field of economics. They provided advice in many areas. We knew that in some areas, the technology was inefficient. I already explained the idea of trucks. Some of their technology was efficient. Their thermoelectric plants are efficient; their mechanical equipment, their winches, are efficient. In many areas, they provided us with efficient technology. They were also isolated for a long time. Technologically speaking, they were behind, and we got some of that, as I explained earlier in the session. We have been influenced. We cannot deny this. We were influenced despite the enormous spirit of independence our Revolution and party have always had. Despite the strong differences we had with them, we were influenced. The most palpable proof of this was during the October Crisis. There came a time when we had to tell them: You are making serious political mistakes. This was in regard to the missiles. Something has been said about this. There came a time when we had to tell them: You are making serious military mistakes. There came a time when we had to tell them that we disagreed with this or that. We never agreed with the way they solved the missile problem. That soured our relations with them for quite some time. They made a mistake. Only a single phrase was missing to turn a mistake into victory. Had they said: We are willing to withdraw the missiles if you will guarantee that Cuba will get what it wants, we would have asked for a few things: that the pirate activities cease, that the economic blockade be lifted, and that Guantanamo Base be closed. No one in the world would have approved of a war breaking out over a naval base in Guantanamo, an economic blockade, or pirate actions.

We could have stopped the economic blockade and closed Guantanamo Base back in 1962, but they did not act and we are still facing those problems. A little bit of equanimity on their part would have achieved this. The papers still exist. Those papers prove the degree of independence and freedom we had in our discussions with the Soviets. Despite all this, it was impossible for us not to be influenced.

I remember back in the days of the Playa Giron incident; when we were being threatened back then, we printed hundreds of thousands of books of a heroic nature. In those books we narrated the main feats and prowesses of the Soviet people during World War II. This was done to lift the morale of the people. We were influenced, but I do believe our revolutionary process has been the most fitting revolutionary process. We did this despite our enormous dependence. We had to depend on them because of the blockade. We needed supplies, raw material, and food from the Soviet Union, and we needed their markets. However, I reiterate that our socialism is very much ours. Our freedom is the greatest a people has ever attained. We were constantly being referred to as a Soviet satellite. There is no longer a USSR and we continue to exist. This is why I used the metaphor: They said we were a satellite when we were really a star that shined with our own light. I truly believe that this has amazed the world. We dreamed of a better and more perfect socialism.

To a certain extent, that enormous aid and help we received was bad for us. We became spenders and squanderers. We were receiving unlimited amounts of fuel. I want you to know that for years all we had to do was send a telegram saying that we were running out of fuel oil, that the gasoline was not enough, that we needed more diesel, and then ships were immediately sent with fuel oil, diesel, or gasoline. It reached such a point that our fuel consumption, which was 4 million tons in 1960—that was when the blockade was imposed and we were left without fuel—was approximately 14 million tons 30 years later. We were even exporting oil. When we began saving oil, the sugar mills were using 500,000 tons to produce crude. Today they do not use one ton to produce crude. We exported the surplus of oil, and the Soviets approved the export of any surplus of oil we had. Let me tell you that there came a time when our oil exports became our largest foreign exchange provider. That will give you an idea of how much we had as a result of that relationship. All that taught us to squander.

This country had 89,000 tractors. Everyone went to ball games, to outings, to visit a girlfriend, and to parties in tractors. We had all the services and tractors. We could have built more aqueducts. Today we continue to use a lot of fuel because water must be taken to the workers' villages in tractors. In other words, we could say that to a certain degree that relationship corrupted [pervirtio] us.

Today we are truly learning to save. Today we are saving. It seems incredible that with such small amounts, relatively small amounts of money, our media are operating. This gives you an idea how well we have learned to save.

It seems incredible that even after losing 78 percent of imports due to the U.S. blockade, which makes everything more expensive, this country remains organized and functional despite all the limitations. The foods that we now have to bring from great distances cost much more, and fuel is more expensive. Everything is more much more expensive.

Now is when we are learning to save. If in the future we begin to pick up our economy little by little, someday we may have to erect a monument to the special period. One may say that we talk about the special period but there are even worse problems than the special period in the world. The world has the problem of underdevelopment, the Third World, and uneven trade. Those are some of the problems of many countries. In other words, there are very serious problems to be solved.

We have to solve the special period amidst underdevelopment. We still have pretty difficult tasks ahead of us. We must overcome the special period and develop ourselves. These are our two tasks in today's world. When we reach these objectives we will triplicate our efficiency, our capacity to use the resources efficiently, and our capacity to save.

Times will be better once we get through today's poverty and need. We will manage our resources much better, which is something we are learning with this terrible test we are going through. Those times will be indefinitely different from these, from abundance and waste to the situation we are facing today.

We need to work little by little, gradually, from the point we are at right now. If we do everything we should do, we should begin to recover little by little. It would be a lie to tell the people that under these circumstances and in view of the economic blockade.... [pauses] without the economic blockade, without the sabotage, without the harassment that constantly victimizes us, we could in a shorter period of time—not immediately, as Robaina said—start overcoming the special period. If the business dealings we are making now were not sabotaged, things would undoubtedly be much easier.

Now, just look at the difference between the things that have happened in the USSR. The USSR collapsed—a country that produced 630 million tons of oil, 700 billion cubic meters of gas, hundreds of millions of tons of coal, with great power plants, great hydroelectric plants, great nuclear power plants, and a limitless amount of raw material, wood, and minerals. That country collapsed.

As we explained earlier, we were pleased, all of us were pleased with the news we got from the USSR in regard to their attempts to perfect socialism. We wanted to see how they went about doing it, and what they did. Undoubtedly, some of the things they did we did not like in the least, especially when we saw that they were beginning to destroy the history of the USSR. A country cannot exist without its history. No country has ever had a history as heroic as the USSR. They began to destroy their history. They began to destroy the party. They began to destroy the government. They began to destroy the state. They ended up without a party, without a government, without a state, and without history.

When we saw this process we realized that that was not going too well. Today we can clearly see that they did not have a clearly defined idea of what they wanted. They began to play with all those things and the fact that this country collapsed is truly saddening and grievous. It is saddening and grievous in a special way to us, and it is saddening and grievous for the Third World. It is saddening and grievous for the entire world.

Now they do not know what to do. As much as the West wanted to have the USSR disintegrate, now that it has happened it is a cause of sorts of concerns for the West. There are conflicts in all areas, production has dropped extraordinarily, and I ask myself if that was necessary.

That is why when they talked about socialism and more socialism, I also read the book on perestroyka from cover to cover. By then it was clear that we could not do some of the things they were doing in a series of areas. We carried on with our country's spirit of independence and with the experience we had obtained. We were very careful.

You may remember that when Gorbachev came, I clearly explained at an ANPP [National Assembly of People's Government] that the conditions were very different and that we did not have to do exactly what they were doing, that if they wanted to experiment with the individual parcels of land—I mean individual property—that we did not have to make the same experiment because we had 70,000 individual landowners.

We knew how the individual parcels, the cooperatives, and the state farms operated. Instead, we went after a copy or a serviceable imitation of all that. Comrades, we must say that perestroyka had a striking influence on our country.

The world has begun seeing the tragic and serious consequences of all those things. You would have to see the suffering all this has brought to those peoples. Who knows what sufferings will follow because they should have perfected socialism, not destroyed it.

Gorbachev never spoke of destroying the Soviet Union or of destroying socialism. He always spoke of improving and perfecting it and the other socialisms. Who could oppose such propositions? Hard and terrible events followed and all this had consequences for our country. What fault do we have in all this? That that country, which had such solid commitments in all areas, would cease to exist is something that seemed incredible but that should be and has been a lesson to us.

It should be a lesson for the doubts, vacillations, and confusion of people discussing whether capitalism or socialism is better. We must stress that while under the capitalist system, this country never attained what it has attained through socialism. We would probably be another Haiti, with 11 or 12 million inhabitants. Population growth in this country was reduced when jobs were created and people were educated. We would probably have some 13 or 14 million inhabitants. Oil at today's prices. [sentence as heard] That was the kind of future we had to look forward to. No one got permission

to enter the United States. The Revolution opened the doors of the United States to hundreds of thousands of emigrants.

The first emigrants left the country for political reasons, and many others left for economic reasons. These were people who wanted to go to live in the United States and have a higher standard of living. There are hundreds of millions of people around the world who want the same. The Mexican-U.S. border is crossed by more than 1 million Mexicans, and there is no socialist revolution in Mexico. The Mona Passage has been crossed by hundreds of thousands of Dominican citizens, and there is no socialist revolution there. Long caravans of Haitian boats try to get to the United States. There also are many, many Colombians, Central Americans, and Latin Americans trying to get into the United States. In Europe they are experiencing the same situation with the millions of Turks, Yugoslavs, and North Africans who want to live in Europe. The North Africans are the ones who work the hardest. They have always been chosen to do the hard work.

Without revolution, there would have been no immigration; without revolution, that privilege granted solely to the Cubans would not have been possible. No citizen of any other country in the world can enter the United States illegally and ask for residency. In its hateful war against Cuba, the United States decided that all Cubans who arrived in the country claiming to be political refugees and saying they wanted to stay would be authorized to remain in the country. No citizen of any other country has that right.

Only recently, a ship full of Chinese citizens tried to dock in the United States. The U.S. authorities were alarmed and went crazy doing all they could to send the Chinese citizens back. However, all of you know that any lumpen or common criminal, who in any other case would not be authorized legal entry to the United States, is automatically admitted to the country once he gets there in a boat, raft, stolen boat, plane, or whatever. The United States openly encourages this. The United States does not hide that it encourages illegal departures from this country. These illegal departures result in the deaths of many people. The United States does not care if children, women, old people die in the attempt to get to the United States. All they are interested in is publicity, the publicity they create by using the people who reach the United States under those conditions. The number of illegal departures has increased since the country's economic situation has become more difficult.

Without the revolution or socialism, this country would not have been anything. It would be like the rest of the Central American, Caribbean, and Latin American countries. It would not even be able to dream about the levels of universal education, health care, culture, recreation, sports, employment, social secutity brought about by the revolution. What would Cuba be like with capitalism? I think it would be the world's greatest brothel, the world's greatest casino or gambling hole. That is what Cuba would be. For many years they had carried out a work of perversion, deformation, and corruption of our country through all available means. We would never have been able to see the examples of dedication, heroism, virtue, and morale that we see today under such difficult conditions.

The revolution came to consolidate the independence of the nation. Today the revolution and the people have to defend that independence, because that is the independence for which Cubans have been fighting for 150 years. We escaped from becoming a U.S. colony. We escpaed from becoming a Miami. We escaped from becoming a Puerto Rico. Today we must defend all this.

In that struggle, I believe it is not necessary to remind you of the importance of your work.

Let us look at other experiences that are already better known to all of us. The Chinese experience, for example. The Chinese people have made many reforms, but they established four principles. Look at the difference between the policy followed by the Chinese and Soviets. The Chinese established four basic principles. One can understand this better every day. First, to persist in socialism; second, to maintain the role of the party; third, what they call the people's democratic dictatorship—in other words, the government of the workers, the government of the revolutionary people, they call it just that: people's democratic dictatorship; fourth, support themselves on the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao Zedong.

Just look at their wisdom. Despite the serious mistakes Mao Zedong made....[pauses] it would be objective to say that he made mistakes during the Great Leap Forward. He also made mistakes during the Cultural Revolution. Despite many of these Chinese leaders having suffered the consequences of the Cultural Revolution, they preserved Mao Zedong's figure and ideas. They criticized the mistakes that were made.

They rectified the mistakes but they did not destroy Mao Zedong's stature: his history, the Long March, the great merits he earned in the fight against Japan and in the fight for liberation. They preserved his stature. In other words, they preserved the idea of socialism; they preserved the party and its role; they preserved the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao Zedong; and they preserved their history, all of which is contrary to what the Soviets did.

They understood that this gigantic country of approximately 1.2 billion inhabitants—its approximately population—could not be led and developed if they destroyed these four pillars. That is why the Chinese people have achieved considerable progress with their reforms, because they made those reforms in an orderly manner. There it is really difficult, because there are 100 million hectares of cultivable land to feed more than 1 billion Chinese people. I believe the Vietnamese, who maintain similar principles, are also making important progress.

We have had a great deal of contact with the Vietnamese and the Chinese. We analyze all experiences. That does not mean we are going to start copying what the Vietnamese and the Chinese are doing. They are the first to counsel their friends not to copy. If we study the experience acquired in those countries, it could be useful. It is clear that the conditions are very different. In Cuba, 80 percent of the population is located in the cities. All agriculture is mechanized.

In China, 75 percent of the population—800 million peasants—live in rural areas. They even made some agricultural reforms. They gave very small portions of land to the peasants. Chinese peasants plant the rice plant by plant. They obtain two harvests. They have enough time, because they plant in seedbeds before the actual planting. By doing this, they are ahead by one month. By doing this, they obtain two harvests on insignificant amounts of land.

We cannot do this. In Sancti Spiritus, for example, we have a rice crop of 30,000 hectares. The maximum a single Chinese family has been given is a quarter of a hectare. Many have even less than a quarter of a hectare. If we were to give 1 hectare to each family, we would need 30,000 families, whereas today, 1,500 workers labor with the aid of machinery. If we were to give what the Chinese give their peasants, we would need 120,000 families. Do you think that in the republic, we could find 120,000 families to give a quarter of a hectare to? [Chuckles] You will not find them. This became an irreversible reality when 80 percent of the population became urbanized. The Vietnamese are like the Chinese. They have 80 percent of the population in rural areas.

In other words, there are some measures that we cannot take. We can create the UBPC, which correspond to population distribution. They have done many things and have given us some advice. Regarding the problem of excess currency, the Vietnamese warned us against certain mistakes they made. They have reiterated this to us, and have said: Be careful. Do not make certain mistakes we have made. Of course we must point out that the Vietnamese people have had a very friendly attitude toward us. China's attitude toward us has been very friendly. It was an honor to Cuba that Chinese President Jiang Zemin's first official visit was to Cuba.

Contacts have been extremely useful because through them we have obtained a clear idea of what they are doing and how. Through those types of contacts and through visits with delegations from that country, we have been able to acquire a broad idea of what they are doing.

I must say that this man is one of the most interesting personalities to visit Cuba. He is an educated, capable, communicative man. He knows several languages. He had to study English while a young student at the pre-university level. He had to study Japanese when the city he grew up in came under Japanese occupation. He later had the opportunity to study Romanian and Russian, besides knowing Chinese, which is probably his greatest merit. [chuckles] He knows the language of Shanghai and the language of Beijing. As many of you know, all the Chinese languages use the same signs, but the pronunciation is different. He is truly a very intelligent man.

Text] The best impression that we have.... [rephrases] The most satisfactory thing that we have seen in those contacts is their unquestionable will to build socialism and to carry forth the development of socialism, and the defense of socialism.

Of course, they have made a great number of reforms. The Vietnamese people have made changes more recently, and the Chinese for some time now, but they have done so with great wisdom and caution. Consider that they have made a series of new reforms. They are applying new methods that [words indistinct] but I have reached the conclusion that this gigantic country cannot develop, progress, and solve the historic problems it has....[changes thought] Keep in mind that in 25 years its population will be 1.5 billion. Each year its population grows two times Cuba's population. They have been able to clothe, feed, and improve the living conditions of 1.18 billion people.

I have reached the most absolute conviction that without socialism, which was precisely what gave them the victory over feudalism and foreign occupation, and without the basic ideas of the [word indistinct], the party, and its history this country could not exist or develop itself. I have reached that conclusion, and they are obtaining great success. It is one of the fastest developing countries in the world at the moment. The Vietnamese are also progressing.

For us this is excellent news because we see socialism consolidating itself in a country of more than 1.2 billion people and in another country of great history and of great heroism where more than 80 million people live. There are approximately 1.3 billion people living under socialism; that is why no one can talk about the end of socialism. Of course, they cannot treat China like they treat Cuba. Not even Vietnam. They live farther away. China does not suffer a blockade. The empire is softening the conditions with Vietnam. They are already allowing U.S. business offices in that country. They cannot take the risk of losing such a gigantic market as that one, especially a country that grows like Vietnam.

That is not Cuba's situation. For us everything is much more difficult. But we must be capable of working and struggling under such difficult conditions.

Lage [Politburo member Carlos Lage] explained how we are prioritizing a series of activities. He explained how the tourism investments are progressing. I must say that just yesterday.... [Changes thought] A few days ago, when we inaugurated the hotel in Cayo Coco, a joint venture agreement was signed to build 3,000 houses; this is in addition to another 3,000 houses that we had previously

agreed on for the same place. They are agreements to build 6,000 apartments, not houses, in that key which was previously isolated and inaccessible. Today a beautiful road connects those keys. The first hotel that was built is ours, and it was built with our own capital.

Yesterday we signed an agreement for investments in another place for $600 million. It also is in one of those places that we exploited by building up the embankments. In other words, these investments are maturing despite the imperialist resistance, despite the sabotage; investments that are not here in the capital are maturing. If there is one place where we would like to have a minimum of tourism, that place is here in the capital. We must develop our natural resources.

The oil situation is very difficult. It is our Achilles' heel. If we solve....[rephrases] When we solve the fuel situation, we will have the main problem solved. Today we have to save fuel in every activity and make the power plants contribute to the national network, conserving energy wherever possible. And there is still potential for more energy conservation.

We must say that lately the main effort has been silently directed toward finding oil. We have reached 1.1 million [unit not specified]. We have needed modern technology. We have created partnerships that allow us to extract twice the amount of oil we had been extracting from many deposits and using different techniques. It is true that that oil is thick, it corrodes the boilers in a certain way, and that producing cement and electricity with it requires a greater maintenance of those installations, but we have the hope of finding light oil.

Of course, in virtue of the steps that we have taken, today we use the most modern techniques and methods. Today we are working with the most modern equipment for oil exploration. In other words, we are working very hard on the oil problem.

[Text] We also have been working hard in other areas such as the pharmaceutical and the biotechnological industries. Today it is an area that no longer requires too many investments. We have truly created an industry. Today the battle lies in finding markets despite the competition of multinational corporations. Despite this competition, I can assure you that we are advancing. Despite all the obstacles, we are advancing in those areas.

All the other programs are being developed in extremely difficult conditions. The food program has faced fertilizer, pesticide, fuel, and animal feed shortages. In other words, the food program has truly been a difficult task because of the conditions it has been carried out in. The construction of housing is beginning to pick up with the construction of low cost housing. There is a strong movement to solve this situation in all the provinces thorugh these means. There are many other transactions and businesses that are being created.

Consider the decrease suffered by the sugar harvest this year. From 7 million it dropped to 4.2 million metric tons. As Lage explained, it was 1.7 million metric tons short of the goal. It has deprived the country of close to $400 million. The low nickel prices also deprived us of many more millions of dollars. As he said, the low prices of the seafood exports because of monetary fluctuations also cost us many millions of dollars.

I want you to know that it has been a true heroic deed to have supported 1993. You cannot imagine how great. You cannot imagine the work and effort that was necessary, the solutions, and how these solutions were sought for the next sugar harvest. The next harvest will not be much greater, but [word indistinct] a little better.

Now we are working on the recovery of the sugar industry. We have established good agreements in the citrus industry; we have saved the citrus plantations; we have established commercial associations in the citrus industry; and the same goes for many other activities.

I believe everybody is looking for something, but one must look in an orderly manner. Maybe one of the negative tendencies that is being developed is that everybody wants to set up a small shop. Everybody wants to get some foreign currency, and in whatever manner they can. That must be done in an orderly manner. Everybody wants to set up a store. That must be done in an orderly manner.

It is true that when the depenalization was established for [foreign currency] the prices at the stores that supplied tourists and diplomats were low. That network of stores had to be used. Logically, prices were increased. Why? Because if someone has the privilege of buying something that others cannot buy, it is fair that something be left for the benefit of those who do not have the possibility of purchasing in a foreign currency store. Therefore, that policy was applied. Sales increased. Sales continue to increase and all that is being regulated.

These transactions should make up a pretty important source of income, but with a cetain risk. I am not talking about the (Barbarita)- type transactions, because there is a mechanism so that everybody can consult, analyze, and approve or disapprove the suggestions made. What we cannot allow are free markets. But there is a strong tendency. There is a strong tendency of indiscipline. There are strong tendencies toward a free market, even within the state organizations and institutions. We must do this with great order; if not, everyone begins to horde and waste money. Therefore discipline is necessary. These types of transactions need to be analyzed and approved. No one should make inventions freely since there are mechanisms they can consult and get a prompt response.

Even the idea for JUVENTUD REBELDE's small business, the printing of their small newspaper for the tourists—it was submitted and then rapidly approved. Not a single minute was lost. We already know what is going to be done with those funds. That is why in the

Central Committee meeting we made a strong call for discipline. Because even ministers could get involved in this indiscipline, and when you realize it, they are inventing something.

We have said clearly and flatly that the established procedures for each one of these things will be rigorously applied. If rumors arise, as it was demonstrated here today, it is because someone is thinking about something. A minister comes up with an idea, he organizes a commission and begins to analyze it, and from that commission all kinds stories begin to emerge. It has even been established that to create a commission and analyze something, the idea must first be submitted.

We have already heard the (Cuyo) story; Felipe finally gave us the entire version. How does its go, Felipe? It is better that you tell us. He says he might lose his hair stylist. Tell it to us clearly, the way you told it before.

[Felipe] The hair stylist heard it while she was waiting in line from a woman who had heard it from her neighbor whose husband was working in this and knew all about these things.

[Castro] [Chuckles] Alarcon, have you assigned someone to look into these transactions—the transactions with excess currency? Some people organize something and then all kinds of stories emerge.

Today it is very difficult to keep a secret here. It is very difficult. [chuckles] We must do what we can, because it is fair to say that journalists cannot be considered the only indiscreet individuals, that is if they are accused of being indiscreet. Today we must be careful with everything. Above all, we must be careful, considering the enemy's espionage. In other words, many times we (?say things unofficially), but we must be careful. As I explained during the congress, we know of many of the activities that the CIA of the United States carries out. They work very actively. I can assure you that they have no scruples of any kind—in plain language. I can assure you that the dirtiest and most cynical ideas are manipulated and dealt with as if they were the most natural thing in the world.

The U.S. policy's cynicism has just been proven with the 200 nuclear tests that they carried out secretly. While they want to take North Korea's eyes out, because they say the Koreans have research centers that could allow them to build nuclear weapons, and they threaten them even with war, they carried out 200 secret nuclear tests. Just look at the adversary we have. Just look at what an adversary. Their intelligence services work very hard against us. That is why discretion should be a principle in many activities, at least so they do not blame us.[as heard]

There are things that we can keep secret, and we do keep them secret. Historically, we have proven that we can keep difficult things secret. The whole process of the installation of strategic missiles was a secret known to millions of Cubans, yet the CIA did not know about it. [chuckles] They found out about it when they sent their planes. As we have said before, it was a mistake by the Soviets. After they installed the surface to air missiles, they allowed the U-2 planes to fly over. That was the mistake we made on that occasion.

We can maintain some secrets, but today everything is difficult, because there is more disloyalty and weakness. It is easier for them to penetrate; it is easier for them to buy people; it is easier for them to carry out their espionage activities, and all of this makes our work a lot more difficult. But we continue to work. If we resist we will win.

Just look at some recent examples so you can see that it is not easy to govern the world. We have a superpower which has established a unipolar world, but that world is a very difficult world to govern. Just look, it is very difficult to govern. They want to govern the world, but the world is almost impossible to govern. Look at what happened in Somalia—what seemed like a field trip, an invasion with tens of thousands of soldiers to bring food. They have already killed more than 10,000 Somalis: men, women and children. Just look at the methods that this new world order uses to help the rest of the world.

They found resistance. It is incredible that this people, with the terrible lack of necessities they suffer and despite their lack of unity, were capable of resisting. That resistance caused the U.S. Government to make decisions with regard to their policy in that country. We must recognize that this government had the courage to rectify and understand that they had entered a dead end and decided to withdrawal its troops in a specific time period.

In Bosnia-Hercegovina, where some time ago the United States was a party to the idea of offering troops, today just about no one wants to be there. The world has problems and it will have even greater problems, and it will become ungovernable for them.

Now, just compare our people's resistance power with another country's capability to resist a military aggression. What other country can be better prepared than us with the doctrine of the correct defense? None. Because you cannot say that Iraq had a correct doctrine of defense. It was the idea of conventional war, while we have the idea of the people's war. In other words, despite the special period, the country not only has been able to maintain its defense capability, it has been able to increase its capability. Even though we no longer receive the resources that used to arrive here continuously, we have even been able to strengthen the defense of our country, with much fewer costs.

That is why it is so important to resist. To resist not only do we have to make the superhuman efforts that we have been making in many fields, but we must make a superhuman effort in the political field. It must be done by the party, by the mass organizations, and by the Union of Young Communists. That effort must be made by you. We count on you.

I have the strongest conviction that we will be able to overcome any difficulty or problem and that we will cooperate with you in optimizing the work of the media. What we need to do is to preserve the work of the media. That is why I wanted to talk to you a little on this. We will do the impossible. Robertico [Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina] said we have done everything possible and we are doing the impossible.

We will not work miracles later, we are already working miracles to make sure our media have paper, our radio has its nuts and electronic components or transistors, and our television and our technicians have video tapes [audience laughs] and anything else they need. Since the technology has been changing, we have been left behind [chuckles]. There are gifts that can ruin you. Others were given these things, but we do not have that problem.

I believe if we go forward with our plans we will be able to solve the problems. Today there is a greater understanding by the population. Before it was much more difficult. Today the people know that we take measures not because want to, but out of necessity.

All these measures also have a negative effect. They have an effect that weakens the people. It has a certain corrupt effect. But we must know how to be virtuous on the streets, not virtuous in an ivory tower, as we have said on other occasions. We must know how to be pure and virtuous in the midst of all these problems.

Therefore, our battle is much more difficult. Nevertheless, we are sure, as you are, that we will win [applause] with this magnificent contingent of journalists, all of us united and in cooperation one with another, as we have said here.

That is another dimension that has emerged: integration, the combination of the press and the radio. All this will multiply our resources. All this will multiply our forces. All this will allow us to take advantage of the talent that we have available. We will not have an excess of journalists. The work we have ahead of us is so great that we will need all of them. I do not know how the situation of those given amnesty [amnistiados] will end up. I hope [chuckles] you have the means or the opportunity to win their hearts. It may be very difficult. There are people who cannot be won. Our duty is to win all who can be won without being tolerant of a lack of principles, of blackmail, and those things that demoralize our people.

That is why I believe that in the end the decision is correct. No one can say there is no generosity. If there are doubts, we can expound on them. If they can be corrected, we must set only one condition: that they be the best. We will not settle for them simply returning to the family of journalists; they must be among the best, and not among the ranks of the journalists. This is a problem you will solve.

I have already spoken a lot, but I believe I will say what all our comrades are feeling. This has been a magnificent final session of the UPEC Congress, and we leave here feeling happy. We marvel at this magnificent meeting that we have had with you. Thank you very much. I am not going to say socialism or death, because it is assumed [crowd chuckles] [applause], nor am I going to say fatherland or death, because it is also assumed. [applause]

Fidel Castro Gives 35th Anniversary Speech

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[Speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro at a national ceremony to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the victory of the Revolution and the 10th Anniversary of the awarding of the title of Hero of the Republic and the Order of Antonio Maceo to the city of Santiago de Cuba in Santiago de Cuba—live]

[Text] Fellow countrymen: The month of December that has just ended has been one with the most intense work in the revolution's history: We celebrated Finlay's anniversary—science and medicine day; we formed the association of Cuban revolution fighters; held the UNEAC [National Cuban Writers and Artists Union] Congress, the science and technology forum, the party central committee meeting, the National Assembly of the People's Government [ANPP] meeting, plus countless public and private meetings—all held during December, a truly tiring and admirable month. Nevertheless, something very important remained: No weariness could prevent a few of us from traveling to the city of Santiago de Cuba to commemorate this anniversary. Today we celebrate a most memorable day of our history.

First of all, the meeting of the triumphant troops with the people—those the Yankees would not allow in 1898. In a very unfair move they prohibited the Mambisas troops from entering the city of Santiago de Cuba. That 1 January was not only memorable for that event, which took place in the city of Santiago de Cuba, a day that served to define whether or not a revolution was to take place. That day defined whether our country would be absolutely and truly independent.

Crucial events took place on that day: In the pre-dawn hours a coup d'etat was staged to scuttle the revolution's triumph. On that day again, the current Santiago de Cuba Province played a decisive role. That same morning, from the city of Palma Soriano, the order was issued to all rebel troops to continue advancing. Instructions were given to the Camilo [Cienfuegos] and the Che [Guevara] columns to advance rapidly on the capital.

Instructions were sent to the city of Santiago de Cuba for the people to be prepared to support the forces that were coming to liberate this city. A call was made for a revolutionary general strike, which paralyzed the whole country. Such was the revolution's overwhelming popular force that the troops stationed at the garrison in Santiago de Cuba placed themselves under the unconditional orders of the rebel forces that very night.... [pauses] or that very afternoon. That day we achieved

what we were unable to achieve on 26 July 1953. In the evening, the whole city joined the thousands of rebel soldiers and the soldiers who had defended the tyrant up until the previous day. They came together to form an impressive force capable of crushing any form of resistance that could arise anywhere else in the country. There was, however, no such resistance anywhere in the country. The forces of the enemy joined the rebels everywhere and the people rose in arms. Meanwhile, the invading forces completed their missions, reaching La Cabana and Columbia fortresses.

For the first time in our history, the people held the weapons in their hands, as so seldom has happened before in this hemisphere. We were able to speak of revolution for the first time. That night, from this same balcony, we spoke of true revolution. [applause]

Many of the principles we have followed during these 35 years were proclaimed that night. It was said then that for the first time there would be a revolution of the people, by the people, for the people.

Injustices would be ended. There would be true equality, brotherhood, and freedom for the people for the first time in the history of our country.

I remember some of things we said back then, and I will try to recall them. We said that men of the revolution could also make mistakes, but these men would never betray their principles. We said the men of the revolution would be honest; that the men of the revolution would never abandon the ideas our generation and the generation that preceded us had fought for so much.

That date and that night, because of their importance, will constitute a page in our history that will never be erased.

The wars of 1868 and 1895 began precisely here in Santiago de Cuba, a town that had fought so much, had sacrificed so much, and had shed so much blood for the dignity and independence of the fatherland. It was here in Santiago de Cuba and in the eastern provinces where the heroic history of Santiago was written. It was here in these eastern provinces where there were so many deeds by brilliant combatants and heroes. It was here in this city where Maceo, Moncada, Crombet, and so many other patriots were born. It was here in this city where Jose Marti came to shed his precious blood. It was here in this city where the Moncada fighters began their struggle. It was here in this city where the decisive events I mentioned on that 1 January occurred. It was here in this city where throughout our generation's struggle for liberation so many pages of courage and patriotism were written, including the 30 November uprising and the battles waged by the people of Santiago de Cuba during the 25 months of war waged in the eastern mountains and in the fields of other provinces.

We had no doubt whatsoever what would happen on that 1 January. We had no doubts that we would take this city. A few days earlier, we were forced to cease operations because after a clash with opposing forces, they recognized their defeat and proposed an end to the war and the beginning of the revolutionary stage. They did not keep those agreements, and that delayed the attack on the city a few days. On 1 January we were forced to advance full speed on the city. The city was well organized. There were hundreds of weapons inside the city itself. We had no doubts whatsoever that the people of Santiago de Cuba were to cast the final blow to tyranny. Fortunately those battles were never fought because the sweeping force of the revolution took over. The coup failed and optimum conditions were created for the revolutionary victory. Thus the city won not only enormous prestige but received the deserved honor of being declared a hero city and decorated with the Antonio Maceo Order. That happened 10 years ago, and we commemorate it today. [applause] Just as we did five years ago from this same podium, we proclaim the brave watchwords: Socialism or Death! [applause]

Three historic anniversaries! In round figures, today we are commemorating the 35th anniversary of the 1 January victory, the 10th anniversary of the awarding of the hero city decoration, and the 5th anniversary of the proclamation of the slogan Socialism or Death. I ask the people of Santiago de Cuba: Could we have gotten by without appropriately—albeit austerely—celebrating these three anniversaries today? [crowd responds: "No"] Would the people of Santiago, the elderly and the young alike, have gone without this very deserved honor? [crowd responds: "No"] Could there be a better time than this to express our deepest conviction and our most unbending revolutionary spirit? [crowd responds: "No"]

What a beautiful poem was recited here today! For a moment I thought someone had written it for this occasion. I asked our comrade here for the author's name, and she said Navarro Luna wrote it in 1970. [applause] What intuition, what foresight to have written these concepts in such beautiful words, so adequate and so appropriate for moments such as this, 23 years later.

People of Santiago de Cuba, we have fought hard and we have fought for a long time. Our forefathers fought for over 100 years in a long, bloody battle. There were difficult setbacks such as the events of the war of 1868, which never ended in glory. After ten years of excruciating battles that almost drained the patriots of their strength, there came something that honors us and makes us proud: the Baragua protest, an expression of our will to continue the struggle.

It was a hard, a very hard blow to the country because, when we had practically defeated the Spanish forces, the imperialists' intervention deprived us of our victory and again made us a colony. It was hard, very hard to accept the results and frustrations of the struggle of our workers, students, and Cuban revolutionaries in the 1930's as they ended up returning to neo- colonialism and the worst forms of political chicanery. However, one day we

did achieve victory. This is the day we are commemorating here in Cespedes Park in Santiago de Cuba. Our reason for doing so is amply justified and righteous because this is a park that honors the patriot who started to fight on 10 October 1888. See how history blends and adjusts itself. You can even see this in history's symbols.

Yes, the struggle has been a long one. However, the struggle is not over yet. We mention 35 years, but what have those 35 years meant? They have been 35 years of struggle and enthusiastic work by the people. They have been 35 years of building classrooms and graduating teachers and professors, ultimately helping us become the country with the largest number of teachers and professors per capita in the world. They have been 35 years of building medical centers, hospitals, general hospitals, and specialized hospitals, as well as regular schools; schools for the handicapped; and art, music, dancing, painting schools. I was saying that these have been 35 years of preparing medical doctors. In fact, we were left with only 3,000 doctors 35 years ago, and now have more than 50,000. We are probably also one of the countries and, perhaps, the sole country with the largest number of medical doctors per capita in the world.

It has been 35 years working to encourage education and culture—education which was able to multiply several times the number of universities in the country, as well as multiply the number of technical schools several hundred times. We have been able to turn out thousands of university professionals. We have been able to reach educational levels unsurpassed by very few countries in the world. In addition, we have been able to establish health standards unsurpassed by very few countries worldwide. It is enough to say that during 1993, even while we going through the harshest moment of the special period, we were able to lower the infant mortality rate to below 10 [for every 1,000 live births]. What will the world say about this? What will the world say about a country which, despite being ruthlessly blockaded, and at the same time undergoing very special conditions, has been able to lower infant mortality below 10? An infant mortality rate which just a few days ago was 9.4. The infant mortality rate in the city of Santiago de Cuba was at a level of 8 for every 1,000 live births. This was just a few days ago! What will the world say when not one single woman died during delivery in the municipality of Santiago de Cuba? [applause].

It has been 35 years of building dams, canals, highways, roads, all sorts of agricultural installations, diary farms, chicken farms, and livestock fattening farms. It has been 35 years of establishing farms, agricultural cooperatives, and credit and service cooperatives. It has been 35 years of mechanizing the country to allow sugar cane, which at one time was cut by thousands of starving workers, to now be cut with machines. It has been 35 years of mechanizing agriculture to carry out field work in a more humane manner. It has been 35 years of mechanizing construction activity, expanding ports, and building wharfs and terminals to handle sugar in bulk. We have also built piers with modern derricks that allow us to use modern loading and unloading systems at our ports.

It has been 35 years of mechanizing crops such as rice, which in the past was done by hand. It has been 35 years of building all kinds of factories and industries, 35 years of installing electrical plants and electrifying the country until we were able to provide electricity for 95 percent of the population. It has been 35 years of developing our people's culture and artistic talent, 35 years of building sports installations and developing our country's sports talent, making it accessible to the workers' children. It has been 35 years of building multi-family housing projects and houses, 35 years of building aqueducts and sewers according to our means, and 35 years of developing transportation. It has been 35 years of developing the material part of our country's economy.

We were not working for the privileged or the rich. Those who graduated from our universities were generally the children of peasants and workers—those who became teachers, professors, engineers or doctors; those who went to live in the houses built by the revolution; those who assumed responsibilities and posts were these children.

The revolution did not only work for material things, however. The revolution also worked hard for spiritual things. First of all, it eliminated loathsome racial discrimination. It tirelessly fought to eliminate discrimination against women. It tirelessly fought to create equal opportunities and rights for everyone. It fought to guarantee a retirement or pension for every elderly person. Even those who had not been workers always received the state's support. The exploitation of man by man has truly ended in our country. [applause].

Political chicanery, in all of its expressions, also ended. The revolution fought to dignify man and the fatherland. The revolution fought for justice—not only in domestic policy but also in foreign policy. Noble and generous, Cuba dispatched the aid of its teachers and doctors to so many corners of the world. Noble and generous, Cuba found it in itself to offer its blood in support of the just causes of other nations around the world. I believe and am absolutely convinced that there has never been a more noble and generous revolutionary political process than our revolutionary political process. We played our part as patriots, we played our part as internationalists, and we joined our forces with the most progressive forces of the world. We have defended our sovereign rights and our independence with extraordinary dignity. We have been willing to give our blood and our lives—without the slightest doubt—to defend our ideas, to defend our cause, and to defend our fatherland. [applause]

Who has accomplished more in less time? Who has accomplished more and with such consistency and determination than we have? What revolutionary political process has stayed more loyal to its principles that ours? However, we have been witnesses to tragic events: the truly embarrassing manner in which the socialist bloc

crumbled and the truly embarrassing way in which the USSR disintegrated along with those processes that were the result of colossal sacrifices by the people. They were the result of colossal efforts and colossal acts of heroism. It would seem that history was envious of the glories of our people and wanted to submit us to even more severe trials. What are we doing now but defending 35 years of revolution?

What can we do today other than defend the fruits of more than 100 years of struggle? What can we do today other than defend not only the rights of the past and current generations, but also the rights of the future generations? When we say that we defend the country, the revolution, and the principles of socialism, we are not only talking about ourselves, but also about the future generations who will recount our struggles and our proficiency in surmounting the enormous obstacles we face today. What can we do other than try to be consistent with our history?

In 1993, we have undoubtably gone through the most difficult year of the revolution, but we have done so with dignity and courage. [applause] Navarro Luna [author of poem read earlier in the ceremony] has already mentioned the weak [flojos] and told them to get out of the way. As we have said on other occasions, it is easy to be a revolutionary during good times. It is not easy, however, to be a revolutionary during difficult times. [applause] Those of us who are meeting here are revolutionaries of difficult times. The champions of 1868 and 1895—Moncada and Granma. [applause] They were champions who were able to make our fatherland what it is today. They were champions who had confidence in their country and their people. They were champions who had confidence in man and in man's courage and heroism. Once again, when I say man, I am referring to mankind, which of course includes—and, rightfully so—women. [applause]

Throughout its history, our country has confronted many difficult times. Nevertheless, our country never had such a large contingent of men and women with such an elevated revolutionary culture or such a large contingent of men and women with such a profound and solid revolutionary culture. [applause] For this reason, the weak will never be able to discourage us. For this reason, the weak will never be able to demoralize us. We will pull through, just as we have done during other difficult times. We are capable of pulling through this, which is the most difficult moment of our history. [applause] Instead of becoming discouraged, we must feel proud of being witnesses and participants of these pages in the history of our fatherland.

What are we up against? We are up against the most powerful empire on earth! When the socialist camp and the Soviet Union fell, the imperialist bloc, in a display of repugnant opportunism, decided to become more tyrannical and ruthless toward us. They simply want to make us surrender at any cost. They cannot stand the thought of a country in the world with our people's honor, dignity, and courage. [applause] They cannot tolerate that a country such as ours can resist in the face of the mandates of the hegemonic power to which so many bow today. They cannot tolerate that we are the standard bearers of the most just, noble, and human ideals. Yes, we must say categorically: There has not been a more noble or humanitarian revolution than the Cuban Revolution. [applause] It is a revolution whose behavior—from the moment we respected the first Moncada prisoners up until today, 35 years later—has not had a single blemish. Our behavior has been irreproachable in every respect. There is no other political process as clean as ours.

It is truly incredible that those who were the allies; those who in this hemisphere made thousands of people disappear; those who, in Central America, were the allies and supporters of those who killed thousands of people, most of whom turned up missing; those who were the allies of the South Africans; those who destroyed the revolution in Nicaragua with their dirty war; those who invaded small countries to impose their interests and their laws; and those who loot the world—these are the same people who are trying to blemish the clean and honorable history of the purest of revolutions, and we can shout it out loud: It is the Cuban Revolution! [applause]

We know we are defending those values and all the other values we mentioned tonight, because we know that we are doing the most noble and just thing in the world. For this reason, we have strength and energy to resist and to fight.

We have just ended our toughest year, and if we do everything we should—our duty—with the utmost efficiency, we shall start reversing the situation bit by bit. Only a demagogue or a charlatan could tell his people that these difficulties are slight and the enormous obstacles that lie ahead will be easily won. We say yes, they will be won, but with much sacrifice, work, and struggle. Right now we are already involved in a new stage: Sugar production will not be much greater than last year's, but it must be greater nonetheless. That would be proof that we have reversed the situation. We are already in full harvest time; we cannot lose a week, a day, an hour, or a minute. We cannot allow the harvest to be delayed. Any delays in the harvest would bring forth a new set of problems and difficulties.

We cannot allow delays in sugarcane planting and harvesting and other crops in general. We should not fail in a single activity that we need to face up to. It has been very difficult to produce sugarcane and harvest it in a country where everything has been mechanized and yet suffers from a great fuel shortage, with a nearly total shortage of fertilizers, pesticides, spares, tires, and so on, and so on. We are nevertheless doing it. We are managing to do it with the people's creativity and imagination and with a great effort to conserve.

It is our duty not only to reverse the situation but to develop despite the very difficult conditions of today's world—conditions I will not speak about at this event; despite the tragic destiny that is in store for Third World countries; and despite the increasing plundering and exploitation that is foreseen. We must be sufficiently strong, determined, and capable not only to overcome the specific obstacles that befell us when the socialist bloc collapsed and the blockade became more severe but to overcome the objective obstacles of today's world.

Comrades, I trust we will be able to do this. Comrades of Santiago and revolutionaries throughout Cuba—you, too, will be able to do this. [applause] This is the moment, Comrades, when we must transform ourselves into a nation of giants. Everyone of us must become a giant, and all of us together must turn out more giants such as Jose Marti. We must turn out giants such as Antonio and Jose Maceo, giants such as Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, giants such as Maximo Gomez, giants such as Ignacio Agramonte, giants such as Mella, giants such as Frank Paiz, giants such as Camilo and Che. [applause]

We must be capable of repeating what we did on 1 January 1959 and once again confront all of the challenges we face ahead. Without any doubt, the greatest obstacle has been that there has been a world dominated by an empire. If not the entire world, then there has been a continent completely dominated by an empire. That same empire has attempted to counter the revolution but has been unable to destroy it. It has been unable to make our people grovel. It has been unable and will never be able to conquer us. [applause]

If there is one thing we can say today, it is that the greatest accomplishment the Cuban people have been able to achieve above all other nations in the history of the world is that we have been able challenge the empire. We have been able to resist that empire for 35 years. The empire already knows we are defending values that are very sacred, and we are defending hopes we will never renounce—hopes for which we revolutionaries are willing to go our graves. Maceo already expressed it quite well once: Very well, if they do not die while attempting to take over Cuba. [applause]

Viva the Hero City of Santiago de Cuba! Viva the purest of all revolutions! Socialism or death! Free fatherland or death! [applause]

Raul Castro Congratulates People, Armed Forces

FL3112154093 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1255 GMT 31 Dec 93

[Text] Last night [30 December] at the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces headquarters, Raul and Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida presented epaulets to a group of Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR] officers promoted to the rank of colonel, men who have fulfilled their mission exemplarily in defense, teaching, and research.

After the ceremony, I approached Army General Raul Castro and asked him to speak to the Cuban people. Please listen to his words. I invite our listeners to keep them in mind.

[Begin recording] To our entire people, especially to my FAR and Interior Ministry [Minint] comrades: I congratulate you on the 35th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution. This congratulations is for struggle against all problems. The coming year will also be difficult. Everything is dependent upon our effort.

To the FAR and Minint troops: We have faced difficult times before, even before the triumph of the Revolution; even earlier generations, beginning with the Mambises. We maintain that same spirit of never surrendering, of courageously facing all adversity—objective and subjective problems. There are as many of one as of the other.

This year, during the 35th anniversary, when television and radio play the national anthem—which, as a matter of fact, they forgot to play a year or two ago—please dedicate at least one moment to thinking about, internalizing thoughts: What has each one of us done? Not what have others done. What are our faults? What individual shortcomings have we? Begin with yourself and follow up with an analysis of the whole the Cuban people.

I wish you happiness, which means: Continue the struggle.

Vietnamese Congratulate Castro on Anniversary

FL3112163593 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 31 Dec 93

[Text] Over the last few days, 1 January 1959 has become a constant subject in Vietnam, where numerous ceremonies and congratulations for the 35th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution are being reported by Hanoi's media. Du Muoi, secretary general of the Vietnam Communist Party, Vietnam's President Le Duc Anh, and Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet sent a letter of congratulations to Commander in Chief Fidel Castro on the occasion of such a highly significant date.

Provincial Plenum Letter of Commitment to Castro

FL3112143495 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1000 GMT 31 Dec 93

[Text] The people of Pinar del Rio Province have sent Commander in Chief Fidel Castro a message reaffirming their commitment to further the development of the Revolution and the preservation of the accomplishments of socialism. The letter was read by Fidel Ramos, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba [PCC] in Pinar del Rio, during the plenum of the provincial PCC Central Committee.

This occasion, in addition to being a forum for analysis of the province's 1993 performance, was the right

moment to read the message sent to the province by Army General Raul Castro. Raul congratulated the people of Pinar del Rio for their work and dedication during the 35th anniversary year of the triumph of the Revolution.

Economic Affairs Commission Chairman Interviewed

PA3012131893 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0100 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Interview with Osvaldo Martinez, director of the Cuban World Economy Research Center and chairman of the Permanent Commission of Economic Affairs of the Legislative Assembly, by Barbara Betancourt; date, place not given; from the "Evening Information Review" newscast—recorded]

[Text] [Betancourt] At the end of the ordinary winter session of the Cuban parliament, during which important economic topics were discussed, I had the opportunity to talk to Mr. Osvaldo Martinez, director of the World Economy Research Center and chairman of the Permanent Commission of Economic Affairs of the Legislative Assembly. Visibly satisfied, Martinez evaluated the parliamentary meeting.

[Martinez] I believe I can tell you with conviction that the expectations of the session were met. I believe we produced what we wanted and what is fundamental: a collective reflection of all deputies regarding important and difficult issues.

Given the level of the deputies' participation, obviously the speeches by the commander in chief, the amount of information and ideas expressed during the meeting—and even the agreement to hold a special period of sessions to continue the discussion—I believe that the Cuban parliament has demonstrated a formidable lesson of democracy. This stems from the fact that generally these kinds of measures are taken suddenly, clandestinely in some countries, and are not discussed in parliament or later returned to parliament for further discussion, as it will take place.

[Betancourt] I asked prominent economist Osvaldo Martinez what he thinks of the statements by many deputies who are not economists.

[Martinez] I think that this reveals our progression regarding what we could call our people's economic culture. It is a difficult and complicated matter that obviously has many technical components. I believe, however, that our deputies, as part of our people, have such a keen political sense and a sense of defense of the revolution and its most vital interest that this helps them extraordinarily; in addition, I believe the deputies have seriously prepared for this period of sessions and studied the state of the country's internal finances. I also believe that I was pleasantly surprised by the level of understanding and manipulation of the issues broached during the debates.

[Betancourt] When certain deputies mentioned the implementation of such measures as price increases, policies of gradual taxation, the elimination or reduction of subsidies to companies that do not yield profits as ways to resolve this internal financial imbalance, may someone think these measures respond, for instance, to IMF recipes?

[Martinez] These measures in no way respond to IMF principles. I believe that during the discussion a principle that was stressed throughout was that no one will be left unsupported. No honest Cuban must be afraid of any measure that may be implemented. I think these would be logical measures that would be implemented due to the pressing need to achieve a balance in internal finances as an important step to improve our economy. Such measures would be aimed at the supreme objective of saving the revolution and overcoming the special period; that is why I believe that these measures can in no way be considered—neither from their discussion methods or contents—IMF-type measures.

[Betancourt] I pretty much know the answer to my next question. What perspectives.... [pauses] What do you expect for the 36th year of the revolution, which is about to start?

[Martinez] I expect a year of work, a year that will also be difficult in economic terms. It will require a great working and capacity of sacrifice from our people. I strongly believe, however, that the worst part is now over. I believe we can reasonably argue that the future will be better. We are beginning 1994 not only with a greater ?apacity to resist but also with more consolidated accomplishments and better economic perspectives than those we had at the outset of 1993.

Fidel Castro Inaugurates Sierra Mar Hotel

FL0301121294 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, who is currently visiting Santiago de Cuba, today inaugurated the Sierra Mar Hotel. The four-star hotel, located in the western sector of the province near Chibirico, has 200 rooms. Fidel toured the hotel, accompanied by authorities and an enthusiastic group of Canadian and German tourists. After getting over their surprise at seeing Castro, all the tourists tried to get near him, and to get souvenirs.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified woman in French] Mr. Castro [words indistinct], if you please.

[Castro] There you go.

[Unidentified woman in French] Thank you, thank you, Mr. Castro. [end recording]

The Cuban president admired the hotel, which has been built in the form of terraces on the slope of a mountain. The hotel is part of the tourist development center of the Sierra Maestra Park.

Last night, following the event for the 35th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, and the ceremony during which Fidel Castro was presented with the shield of the city, Fidel met with reporters.

[Begin recording] [Reporter] Commander, today you were awarded the highest distinction in the city. How do you feel?

[Castro] I am very embarrassed.

[Reporter] Embarrassed?

[Castro] Yes. I am embarrassed when I receive those honors and distinctions. Of course, I am honored, but also embarrassed. I do not consider myself deserving of so many honors.

[Reporter] But it is inevitable that you should receive them. It is a way to thank you.

[Castro] When someone gives you something, you must be courteous and accept it. [laughter]

[Reporter] Commander, do you know....

[Castro, interrupts] [Words indistinct] I can only accept it.

[Reporter] Commander, we Cubans like to make comparisons. The people are asking themselves whether the most difficult year of the special period is now behind us. What do you think?

[Castro] I believe this has been the most difficult year. We must do our best to ensure that it was the most difficult. We can do that in 1994 by working more and well. If we do that, we can make the situation change.

Proof of this is the sugarcane harvest. The fact that we have a smaller harvest this year means that we are not changing the situation. This is why we must ensure that this harvest is in accordance with the plans. We must mill all the sugarcane we have planned to mill. We must mill it efficiently. This will show us whether we can change the situation. We will then know if we can produce 200,000, 300,000, or 400,000 tons of sugar. It is a good test. We have worked hard and put forth special efforts.

New things have been done and we should begin to see some results. For example, the work being done by the Basic Cooperative Production Units [UBPC's], and the support of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [Minfar] in the agricultural sector—they have thousands of soldiers working and producing.

We must continue to increase our oil production. We must begin to see our first results in the field of exploration, not extraction, of oil. We must continue to promote tourism. The measures we are taking to decriminalize the excess currency should begin to yield good results. We may begin to see some signs of progress if we do things right. The important thing is to change the situation, even though it is a difficult situation. We are experiencing a special period, the blockade has deepened, and there is an international economic crisis. These are not favorable conditions. This is why we have said that we must overcome not only our problems, but the objective problems experienced by the world, and continue to develop.

[Reporter] I saw you five years ago when you launched the socialism or death slogan. Today when I saw you hold up a replica of Antonio Maceo's machete, I could tell that you were more filled with emotion than you were five years ago. Why?

[Castro] It is only logical. It is a replica of Antonio Maceo's machete and it was a great honor to receive it. I regret not having a horse like the one Maceo had. I regret not having an enemy in front of me. All I needed was the enemy and Maceo's horse. The truth is that Maceo's machete strengthens the arm and energizes the mind. [end recording]

'Alarming Official Figures' on State of Economy

PA3012225893 Paris AFP in Spanish 1911 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] Havana, 30 Dec (AFP)—The state-run television system on 29 December broadcast extensive excerpts of the People's Government National Assembly two-day sessions, which closed on 28 December. As a result, the public learned about alarming official figures on the local economic situation. These are some of those figures:

Annual salaries paid: 8.8 billion pesos.

Surplus currency in circulation: 12.3 billion pesos, or the equivalent of 14 months of salary.

State corporations' outstanding debts with other state corporations: 2 billion pesos.

State budget deficit: 4.2 billion pesos.

Subsidies to cover losses: 4.6 billion pesos.

Subsidies to the agricultural sugar industry: nearly 7.238 billion pesos from 1990 to 1993.

Percentage of subsidized state corporations: 69.

Percentage of profitable state corporations: 31.

The most recent state budget made known to the public was that of 1990, which forecast a 12.463 billion pesos revenue, a 14.448 billion pesos disbursement, and a 1.985 billion pesos deficit.

In the official books, the Cuba peso is equivalent to the U.S. dollar. In the black market, the exchange rate is between 70 and 80 pesos to the U.S. dollar.

Official Daily Assures 'Revolution Will Prevail'

PA0101192794 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1831 GMT 1 Jan 94

[Excerpt] Havana, 1 Jan (EFE)—Cuba today commemorates the 35th anniversary of a revolution that placed Fidel Castro in power; unleashed passions throughout the world, especially among the Cubans, and is now going through its most dramatic moment in its struggle to survive.

Usually, 1 January is not a day of mass demonstrations or a day for official commemorations or speeches, because the Cubans also take part in the worldwide 1 January hangover, although it is true that the average family budget does not allow the majority to get involved in any overindulging on New Year's Eve.

In its latest edition, the official daily GRANMA says, "We have to look at 1994 with optimism, hope, and trust, because we are already 35 and the revolution will prevail." It reports that 1993 "will be remembered by millions of honorable and patriotic Cubans who have known how to firmly resist the onslaught of this difficult period." [passage omitted]

Raul Castro Continues Visit to Western Army

FL0301022494 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 1 Jan 94

[Text] For the past few days, Army General Raul Castro and Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [Minfar] officers have been visiting the Western Army units. Castro and the Minfar officers also have visited army self-sufficiency farms and state farms run by the Youth Labor Army [EJT]. Gen. Castro, accompanied by Politburo members Division General Leopoldo Cintras Frias, chief of the Western Army; Candido Palmero, first secretary of the City of Havana Provincial Committee; and other generals and officers visited Military Unit 4046 of the Cuban Revolutionary Navy, acclaimed for its high military preparedness and discipline. During his inspection of the area in the company of Corvette Captain Vicente Suarez, the second secretary of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba was very interested in learning of the military preparedness of the troops and the possibilities to produce food in the area. He was pleased to learn that the area is appropriate for fish breeding and that works are underway to expand the fishing activities in the area. They are hoping to catch 5 tons of fish a year.

Colonel Arsenio Nardo Cruz, chief of the Infantry Division Unit 1700, explained to Gen. Castro and the Minfar officers the achievements attained by the unit that contributed to its satisfactory results during the ministerial inspection. The unit was graded as good and outstanding in sharpshooting. Raul visited several other units and expressed interest in the living conditions of the soldiers, their health care, the quality and quantity of food the soldiers are getting, and other matters that affect the discipline and political and moral state of the soldier. Raul was very pleased to see a plaque that was drafted and built by Military Unit 2100. The chief of the unit, Lieutenant Colonel Ismael Avila, said that this artillery regiment is very well prepared. During the ministerial inspection, the unit was graded as good. Military Unit 2100 also was graded as outstanding in sharpshooting.

Meanwhile, Col. Roberto Garcia Leyva reported on Military Unit 4790. This unit was graded as good during the Minfar inspection. While visiting this military unit, which is also an anti-aircraft defense post, Raul visited the medical clinic, the sergeants and soldiers club, and other installations.

EJT chief Brigadier General Ramon Valle Lasso in Havana Province met with Raul and the other comrades at Farm No. 2, in Quibican Municipality, one of the state-owned farms where various crops are grown. This farm is run by the EJT. The visitors talked about the plans for the farm next year and the EJT goals for 1994 in Havana Province. The EJT is currently running 19 farms in the area. These farms are the property of seven enterprises [words indistinct] some 5,500 workers, including more than 1,000 farmers. This EJT group works 846 caballerias and they are capable of producing 4 million quintals of tubers, orchard products, and grains. Money is indispensable to run this farm.

The Havana Province EJT has 381 teams of oxen. According to information provided by Gen. Rigoberto Garcia, if the 30 teams of oxen on Farm No. 2 are used adequately, the farm can save up to 10 tons of fuel a year. The chief of the EJT explained how the year's program, which is adapted each work according to the farm and type of crop grown at the farm, contributes to the high productivity of the EJT in the mountain and plains regions where they grow coffee, sugar cane and varied crops.

On the last day of 1993, the second secretary continued his visit to the Western Army. He was joined by Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida, Jorge Lezcano, and Federation of Cuban Women President Vilma Espin. During his visit to Unit 2721, Col. Lucio Morales reported on progress made in the areas of combat for which the unit was graded as good during the inspection. Col. Morales said that the unit also is involved in agricultural production and fish breeding activities and their goal is to increase production in 1994 as well as to catch 18 tons of fish. Raul reviewed the combat techniques and inspected installations.

The chemical defense regiment was the last unit Raul visited. Raul said that he left this regiment for the last because it is the best in the country. The unit has been vanguard unit for the past four years. Unit chief Rolando Cardenas was promoted to the rank of colonel as a reward for his meritorious efforts and proven capacity.

During the Revolutionary Armed Forces military council held to review the gigantic job done in this difficult year that is ending, Raul said:

[Begin Castro recording] On behalf of the commander in chief, I wish you the most heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of our glorious Revolution. All I ask you is that in 1994 we all work with the same spirit of the past three years. [end recording]

Raul Castro Attends FAR Promotion Ceremony

FL0301024294 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, 33 Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR] officers were promoted to colonel and ship captain. The ceremony was presided over by FAR Minister Army General Raul Castro.

Army Gen. Raul Castro and Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida, president of the Cuban Revolution Veterans Association [ACRC], presented the promotions. Officer Rene Corredera Brito, an internationalist pilot who has received the Antonio Maceo Medal of Valor, spoke on behalf of the officers who were promoted. He thanked everyone for the trust placed in them and for the promotion they received, which is a sign of recognition for their work. Brito reiterated the officers support for the cause of the defense of the fatherland and their loyalty to the commander in chief, whose example a FAR officer should follow, always ready to confront the enemy and always filled with the belief that our noble ideals of national independence and socialism will triumph.

Division General Nestor Lopez Cuba, chief of the FAR political directorate, closed the event with a dynamic speech. Div. Gen. Lopez Cuba described 1993 as the most difficult year since the triumph of the Revolution, and he described the special period as a hard test that the patriots and revolutionaries are confronting with courage, loyalty, and the belief that it is possible to resist and win. Lopez Cuba told the officers that: We have absolute trust in you because we know you will be worthy bearers of the title of colonel of the Armed Forces founded by our invincible commander in chief, Fidel Castro, 37 years ago. He will continue to lead us, as always, through the most difficult and glorious moments.

Chile Considers Diplomatic Ties

FL3012190993 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] The Chilean Foreign Ministry has announced that it is ready to advise the government on an eventual decision to reestablish diplomatic ties with Cuba. Chilean Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Simma explained that no deadline has been set for a final decision but affirmed that all aspects of relations with Cuba are being analyzed. The Chilean minister added that the pace at which his ministry is working complies with the opinion expressed by President-Elect Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle to the effect that this type of matter must be undertaken slowly.

Envoy in Nicaragua on Reforms, U.S. Blockade

PA0101173694 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 31 Dec 93 pp 1, 3

["Exclusive interview" with Pedro Lovaina, Cuba's charge d'affaires in Nicaragua, by Alfonso Malespin Jiron in Managua; date not given]

[Text] [Malespin] Cuba is ready to celebrate 35 years of the victory of its revolution. Under what conditions is the Cuban Revolution celebrating this anniversary?

[Lovaina] Cuba is celebrating the 35th anniversary of the revolution amid the most adverse circumstances in its entire history—a time when the socialist bloc no longer exists and the United States is stepping up its inhumane blockade. This entails enormous sacrifices by our people, who are resisting in an effort to protect our national dignity, sovereignty, and the progress achieved in the areas of health, education, and labor.

To give just a few examples, this year the death rate for children fell to 9.6 for every 1,000 children born alive. We have more than 51,000 doctors, and more than 80 percent of the population is covered by the family doctor plan. Not a single school child has been denied registration. Despite our current difficulties, Cuba has achieved very high health indexes compared with the ones the revolution encountered in 1959.

[Malespin] The Cuban Government implemented important changes in 1993. What goals does the country plan to achieve with them?

[Lovaina] All of the measures uphold our socialist principles without giving up a planned economy. Although there will be increased participation of foreign capital, state ownership will prevail. Cuba is looking for structures that will allow a better integration into the world economy, particularly with our Latin American brothers.

[Malespin] Some people think Cuba is implementing a Chinese-style communism. Would you place your country in that category?

[Lovaina] We have taken other experiences into consideration, but, above all else, it is essentially a matter of implementing an efficient, mature socialism that solves national problems and allows us to efficiently achieve development without abandoning the concept of social justice, essentially taking into consideration maritime ideas, too [as published].

[Malespin] Different experts have warned that these measures involve too many risks. What is the evaluation as we start 1994?

[Lovaina] No human project is free of risk—nor is it free of mistakes—but it is important to face these risks and protect the homeland, the revolution, and socialism, as Fidel has stated many times.

[Malespin] [Ernesto] Che [Guevara] warned against making the mistake of giving imperialism even a foothold. Has not Cuba done this with these measures?

[Lovaina] He said this within a certain context, and what he meant was that no concessions should be made to the principles of imperialism. The measures adopted today by Cuba are revolutionary measures to defeat the blockade, to save the revolution's essential achievements, and to protect our sovereignty and national independence. These policies are outlined by the Communist Party of Cuba and by Fidel Castro, and they are fully supported by our people.

[Malespin] The international community has supported Cuba by condemning the U.S. blockade, but it also has asked President Fidel Castro's Government to make in-depth changes. Will there be any in 1994?

[Lovaina] The blockade is aimed at isolating Cuba politically and economically, at undermining the Cuban people's determination to resist, and at creating the image that Cuba is hell. It does this in an effort to discourage solidarity with Cuba and to impose an even more abhorrent political system than the one that existed before 1959.

While a wall has been built to prevent illegal immigrants from other countries from entering the United States, in Cuba's case millions of dollars are spent to encourage illegal immigrants and people without documents to risk their lives to reach U.S. territory.

There are no limitations whatsoever on any Cuban citizens of legal age to travel to the United States—or to any other country—just as there are no limitations on any Cubans living in the United States, or other U.S. residents, from travelling to Cuba.

The United States, however, denies visas to 60 percent of the Cuban citizens who request them at the U.S. interests office in Cuba. Also, the U.S. authorities have strict penal sanctions for North American citizens who visit Cuba.

[Malespin] Referring to official relations with Nicaragua, what is their current status.

[Lovaina] Official relations between Cuba and Nicaragua are good, respectful, and friendly. Until this year, Cuba has maintained free medical assistance in Nicaragua, and a Cuban medical brigade will end its mission in Nicaragua this year.

A new medical assistance agreement has been signed. It will be paid for with financial aid from international organizations. Also, some 900 Nicaraguan students will receive free scholarships in Cuba.

Inter-Caribbean Affairs

Summary of 1993 Regional Developments

FL0101134694 Bridgetown CANA in English 2006 GMT 31 Dec 93

[Report by Rickey Singh]

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, 31 Dec, CANA—Three early general elections resulting in a surprising change in government in one country and a political crisis in another, and closer ties with Cuba and Central America were among the arresting sketches on the political landscape of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) in 1993. There was also a unique meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and five of Caricom's 13 heads of goverment that irritated some Community leaders who subsequently failed to meet separately with Vice President Al Gore.

In Jamaica, which accounts for more than a third of the 13-member Community's ethnically and culturally diverse population, Prime Minister P.J. Patterson led his incumbent People's National Party (PNP) back to power with a massive electoral victory. The March 30 election that coincided with Patterson's first anniversary as successor to the retired Michael Manley as leader of the PNP and government, gave the PNP 52 of the 60 parliamentary seats. But the win was dampened by an electoral turnout of approximately 58 percent, one of the lowest in Jamaica's electoral history, and sustained charges of electoral malpractices, including stuffing of ballot boxes on voting day. The election results forced the opposition Jamaica Labour Party's leader, ex-prime minister Edward Seaga, to publicly indicate that the "rebuilding process" of the party could include determining his own future with the JLP.

Three months later, on June 30, the veteran politician of Belize, George Price, took a gamble with a snap poll that saw his People's United Party (Pup) losing power. The PUP lost by three seats to Manuel Esquivel's United Democratic Party (UDP). The UDP's 16-13 victory, which surprised some political analysts, was its second in three contested elections.

Four months after the poll, Prime Minister Kennedy Simmonds of St. Kitts and Nevis also chose to call an early election on November 29, only to be faced with a crisis that by year-end was posing a threat to the longevity of his one-seat majority coalition government. Simmonds' People's Action Movement (PAM) gained four of the eight seats in St. Kitts—the same number as the opposition St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party—with the three seats in sister territory, Nevis, being shared by the Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM) of Premier Vance Amory (two) and the Nevis Reformation Party, PAM's traditional coalition partner (one). The swearing in of a minority coalition government of PAM and NRP with Simmonds back as prime minister, sparked violent

demonstrations, forcing declaration of a state of emergency, a dusk-to-dawn curfew and an appeal by Simmonds for assistance from the Regional Security System (RSS). Both the curfew and state of emergency were lifted within two weeks, but the bitterness between labour and the coalition remained.

The St. Kitts Christian Council and the Evangelical Association failed in bids to broker a peace that would have resulted in fresh elections within six months, which labour party leader Denzil Douglas said was "the logical and decent thing to do." Douglas, pointing out that his party commanded 54 percent of the votes cast to PAM's 42 percent, warned that a "new election is now inevitable since we have no intentions of being governed by two parties in a coalition overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate." In a no-confidence motion in the new parliament, the CCM's two votes would be crucial to bringing down the PAM-NRP coalition.

The year 1993 also saw changes in the leadership of the governing Dominica Freedom Party (Brian Alleyne for the retiring prime minister Eugenia Charles) and the ruling Antigua Labour Party (Lester Bird for his octogenarian father, Prime Minister Vere Bird, Sr).

There were also numerous technical and ministerial meetings to advance the deepening and widening of the region's 20-year-old economic integration movement, Caricom. At the 14th Caricom summit in The Bahamas in July, heads of government decided to have in place "appropriate measures" so that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), subsequently approved, would not adversely affect the Community's trade and agricultural policies. The region's dissatisfaction over benefits from the current Lome IV convention with the European Community and its concerns over access to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) without "undue disadvantages" from concessions already granted to founding members like Mexico, were also on the agenda of that summit. After the meeting, on August 30, the president of Guyana and the prime ministers of Jamaica, Barbados, The Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago were invited to a unique working luncheon meeting at the White House with President Clinton.

While U.S./Cuba relations remained a cause for concern, for the five Caricom leaders, the Community's access to NAFTA on favourable terms was the major agenda item. They left Washington with a promise from the President that his administration would study the likely negative impact of NAFTA on the region's economies to determine how best it could respond to Caricom's areas of concern. The leaders of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) were not happy over the choice by the Clinton Administration for the August 30 working lunch and, with the exception of Prime Minister Charles of Dominica, failed to show up for a planned October meeting with Gore.

Prime Minister James Mitchell of St. Vincent and the Grenadines reflected his own disagreement when he said that while the President of the USA was free to invite whoever he wished, "I do not recognise two sets of Caricom heads of government." During October, Caricom heads of governments were meeting again for a special session in Trinidad and Tobago, this time with the leaders of the so-called "Group of Three" in Latin America—the presidents of Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia—as well as the vice president of Suriname. Delegates said the meeting was "a positive development in the process of increasing political consensus which is developing in Latin America and the Caribbean...." They pledged to find mutually acceptable solutions to common problems.

Their interest in encouraging deeper involvement of the private sector in new development thrusts in the post-Cold War phase of rising mega-economic blocs, was later reaffirmed when the sixth Europe-Caribbean conference, organised by the Caribbean Council for Europe took place in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic November 10-12. One of the significant developments flowing from that conference was the inauguration on November 28 in Santo Domingo of a federation of European chambers of commerce.

Except for the Port-of-Spain meeting of Caricom and Central American leaders, Cuba was involved in all of the major meetings and events organised by the Community's governments during the year. Having rejected "misrepresentations" and "unnecessary fears" emanating from a group of United States congressmen over a proposed Caricom-Cuba joint commission, the Community's governments went ahead and formally launched the commission on December 13 in Guyana, where the inaugural meeting reviewed the wide range of areas for technical, economic, and cultural cooperation. Earlier, Caricom countries had, for the first time, given overwhelming support to an approved resolution at the United Nations General Assembly in October for an end to the 31-year-old U.S. trade, economic, and financial embargo against Cuba. The Cuban foreign minister, Roberto Robaina Gonzalez, who subsequently made a seven-nation tour of Caricom member states, estimated that the U.S. embargo had already cost his country 40 billion U.S. dollars. Robaina said he would visit the remaining six other Caricom countries early in 1994 to "strengthen our relations with the Caribbean which we regard as a natural ally."

The Caribbean Conference of Churches and the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) of non-government organisations were active in their advocacy for the lifting of the U.S. embargo against Cuba. They were also very vocal, along with Caribbean Rights, in urging Caricom governments to keep alive demands for the international community to help restore constitutional government in Haiti under exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Toward year-end, however, such a development seemed even more remote than prior to the

United Nations brokered peace pact in July at Governor's Island in the USA that called for Army strongman, Raoul Cedras, to step down from power and for Aristide to return by October 30 as head of government.

It was also a year that saw government and tourism officials worrying about crime. (Tourism for the estimated 30 member countries of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation in all four major language areas of the region, accounted accounted for 9.8 billion U.S. dollars in revenue for 1993, or approximtely 100 million U.S. dollars more than in 1992.) Crimes of violence, rape and murder, particularly in evidence in countries like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, and St. Lucia, included among its victims in 1993 the prison superintendent of Trinidad and Tobago, Michael Hercules. Gunned down while on a charity mission, Hercules, hailed as one of the region's strong advocates of penal reform, was given a state funeral and praised by all sections of the society. The year saw a widening between the country's police service and the government, in particular its minister of national security, Russell Huggins, whose disagreements with both the Police Service Commission and the police commissioner, Jules Bernard, were no secret.

The minister's own initiatives on structural changes and "cleansing" of the police service were related to the findings of a Scotland Yard investigative team that had found "endemic corruption" in the country's police service. But he failed to get the early retirement of Commissioner Bernard.

In Jamaica where the incidence of violent crimes and charges of police corruption were also making the news, Prime Minister Patterson, was supported by opposition leader Seaga in the unprecedented appointment as police chief of the retired Army colonel, Trevor Macmillan.

The year also saw an historic ruling by Britain's judicial committee of the privy council in November, commuting to life imprisonment the death sentences of Jamaican prisoners Earl Pratt and Ivan Morgan. The ruling led to intense, and at time angry debates between opponents and proponents of the death penalty. One prompt and dramatic development resulting from the privy council's ruling against the execution of those on death row beyond five years, was the decision by some Caricom governments to commute to life imprisonment the sentence of more than fifty prisoners awaiting execution for murder.

Haiti

Bazin Seeks Peaceful, Fair, 'Haitian' Solution

FL0301161994 Port-au-Prince Signal FM Radio in French 1130 GMT 3 Jan 93

[Excerpt] In a message to the nation on the occasion of 1 January, former Haitian Prime Minister Marc Bazin reaffirmed his support for holding a national conference. The leader of the Movement for the Establishment of Democracy in Haiti [MIDH] believes that the country is threatened by civil war and foreign military intervention. Bazin explained that violence can in no way contribute to a lasting solution to the crisis. For the first time since he resigned, the MIDH leader cited the work done by his government of consensus and public safety. He recalled that at the same period of time in 1992, his government already had several achievements to its credit. Marc Bazin admitted, however, that he did not manage to bring the two opposed parties to the negotiation table. The MIDH leader said a negotiated, peaceful, fair, realistic, Haitian solution must be found to the crisis. [passage omitted]

Cedras Visits Gonaives Garrison

FL0301163194 Port-au-Prince Signal FM Radio in French 1130 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Excerpt] Saturday [1 January] was National Independence Day. General Raoul Cedras, commander in chief of the Haitian Army, went to Gonaives where he attended a Mass in the city's cathedral. The head of the Haitian Army also visited the military of the area, whom he addressed on this occasion.

Journalists were able to cover the event. The Radio Plus correspondent in the area was questioned by military authorities and ordered to appear at the Gonaives barracks on 3 January at 0900. [passage omitted]

CONACOM: 'Haiti Needs a Truce'

FL0301191094 Port-au-Prince Radio Tropic FM in French 1630 3 Jan 94

[Text] In a message published on 2 January, the National Congress of Democratic Movements [CONACOM] pointed out that Haiti needs a truce. CONACOM says it has requested from the Haitian Armed Forces [FADH] the application of concrete measures to guarantee the safety of all the country's sons regardless of political credo. CONACOM's message further states that it is more than time to put an end to the maneuvers of politicians who use FADH members to arbitrarily attack their political adversaries. The party says it has asked President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to see to it that the gathering initiatives that he is organizing abroad during this month of January contribute to pave the way for a true national conference. This national conference is to be held in Haiti and supported by the international community as soon as possible, with the participation of the political and social sectors that agree to work for the establishment of at least an internal democratic state of law, and for the short-term application of the Governors Island Agreement.

Chiapas Crisis

Political Parties Express Concern

PA0301163994 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1341 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Report by Jose Luis Alverta Avila]

[Text] Political parties such as the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI], the National Action Party [PAN], and the Party of the Democratic Revolution [PRD] have condemned the violent incidents in Chiapas.

The opposition is asking that these events not to be used as a pretext for unleashing a witch hunt or persecution campaign or for prolonging political uncertainty.

The political parties agree that the armed uprising in some Chiapas municipalities is a desperate reaction to a situation of severe dissatisfaction by the Indian communities, which have subjected to discrimination, poverty, and plunder for several decades.

PRI, PAN, and PRD leaders made and urgent call to the government not to attempt a military solution for what is an economic and social conflict.

Rene Bejarano, PRD president in Mexico City, said that a massacre in Chiapas must be avoided at all costs and that the events must not be used to initiate a witch hunt or persecution campaign or to create more political uncertainty.

[Begin Bejarano recording] Because in-depth political reforms were postponed for the sake of alleged economic reforms, the chain broke at its weakest link. In that respect, to carry out a military incursion without seeking a negotiated solution would only cause a massacre. [end recording]

At the same time, Cecilia Romero, PAN assistant secretary general, did not reject the possibility that there could be a political group or party with their own specific interests behind the Zapata National Liberation Army [EZLN]. The PAN leader demanded a decisive position from the government to prevent the problem from spreading and to deter other political forces from manipulating the incidents for their own benefit as social peace is at risk.

[Begin Romero recording] This could lead to some type of election manipulation [words indistinct] at this time. On the other hand, the concerns expressed are understandable, but it would be very serious for us to fall into sensationalism. I believe this situation will be controlled. [Interior Secretary] Mr. Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido must know quite well what is happening since he was Chiapas governor at one time. I believe he is still Chiapas governor on special leave. [end recording]

PRI Leader Demetrio Sodi criticized the fact that reports disclosed last May related to the presence of guerrilla groups in Chiapas had been disregarded. Sodi indicated that instead of assigning blame, it is necessary to find out what really took place and why the conflict reached such dimensions.

[Begin Sodi recording] ... blame someone, we would first have to find out what really happened. In other words, if we recall that last May several newspaper reports and interviews indicated that a guerrilla movement was rising in the region. Our contacts with social groups revealed that there were groups obtaining weapons and preparing a spectacular political blow such as what took place yesterday. [end recording]

'Tense' Situation in San Cristobal Reported

PA0301170194 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1518 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Report by Juan Carlos Santoyos from San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas State, for the "Panorama Newscast"—live]

[Excerpts] The situtation here in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas State, remains tense even though soldiers have been deployed here in the main square. This is the situation: There are problems getting food. Stores are closed in some areas. Hotels are serving food only to their guests, and it is just one kind of meal, nothing else. Local drugstores are finding it difficult to obtain medical supplies as members of the Zapata National Liberation Army [EZLN] looted the stores when they arrived. Thus there are no medical supplies for a medical emergency. It is also worth noting that the Mexican Army has resumed reconnaissance and surveillance flights all over the city. Starting at approximately 0700 when the weather allowed because the fog lifted a little, Mexican Army helicopters have been flying over San Cristobal de las Casas and the area 7 km away, where the 31st Military Zone is stationed.

I must also state that local residents are afraid the EZLN members will resume their activities near the city. Up until 0200 we could hear heavy caliber weapons, chiefly howitzers and cannons, firing at rebel objectives. Early this morning I had the opportunity to inspect the city. It was almost deserted. Fear prevails as the ringing of heavy caliber weapons has been heard since early in the morning from both far and near. Many tourists have been stranded here because gas stations are not observing regular business hours as they fear gasoline may be rationed. Why is that? Because so far, Pemex [Mexican Petroleum] trucks have not come to supply the city's three gas stations. [passage omitted] Stores and schools are closed in this city. The only thing we see is that a few people are coming down from the mountain range to try to sell their products here. In Ocosingo and mainly on the San Cristobal de las Casas - Ocosingo Highway, a distance of approximately 117 kilometers, military roadblocks are still up to keep people from entering due to the fierce clashes taking place in the mountain range, as we were told. Stores, public offices, and houses were looted in Ocosingo as well. A report

states that 15 policemen were killed in a clash with the EZLN members. Four members of the Solorzano family were kidnapped. They are local ranchers.

We can also report that in (Chiompla) Municipality a young woman was brutally beaten and raped for refusing to give food to the EZLN members. The state government reported that the Army is in Las Margaritas and Altamirano, although there is no word yet as to whether the soldiers have been able to enter these municipalities. The fighting continues. It was also reported from (Chiompla) that a stronger military operation w??l be conducted, although the time has not been announced. That is what is happening now in San Cristobal de las Casas and on the highway to Ocosingo.

Vatican Offers To Mediate

PA0301181694 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1633 GMT 3 Jan 94

[From the "Panorama" newscast]

[Text] We have received a news dispatch that reads as follows:

After strongly condemning the violent events in Chiapas State, the Holy See has expressed its willingness to mediate so the activists will lay down their weapons and present their demands through legal means. The Holy See advised that the Catholic Church cannot and should not be involved in acts of bloodshed, which the Gospel rejects, nor can it support violence. Therefore, if some lay person or clergyman is involved in these events, it is on a personal basis, as the church—as an institution - distances itself from all of this.

This was stated by (Girolamo Priggiani), the Pope's representative in Mexico, after saying that the developments in Chiapas State are painful, regrettabie, and dramatic. He said the Church shrinks from acts of violence and is not nor can it be involved in this delicate matter in which lives have been lost.

Bishop Denies Ties

PA0301204294 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1916 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Live report by Jose . uis Sarmiento Avila]

[Text] Bishop Felipe Arizmendi, bishop of Tapachula, Chiapas State, has emphasized in an exclusive interview that the Church has nothing to do with the armed rebellion. Quite the contrary, he said, the Church offers to act as mediator to reach a consensus and prevent useless bloodshed.

The prelate explained that the recent events are a desperate measure in the face of the poverty and deprivation in which the Indians are immersed, above all in the Lacandon zone.

Bishop Felipe Arizmendi warned that any violence in Chiapas will result in worse repression of the Indians. He said the important thing is to know who is behind the Zapatista army and to learn if they are acting in favor of private interests that do not include the Indian population.

The Catholic Church in Chiapas has reiterated its appeal that political wisdom and historical responsibility motivate the parties to the conflict to seek an honest and responsible dialogue.

Bishops Reaffirm Willingness To Mediate

PA0401025694 Mexico City Radio Acir Network in Spanish 0056 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Report by Maricarmen Camacho from Tuxtla Gutierrez]

[Text] The bishops of the three dioceses of Chiapas State—namely, Felipe Arismendi Esquivel of Tapachula, Samuel Ruiz Garcia of San Cristobal de las Casas, and Felipe Aguirre Franco of Tuxtla Gutierrez—have reaffirmed their willingness to mediate between the armed groups and representatives of the Mexican Government to establish a dialogue and find a solution to the conflict in the Chiapas State highlands.

During a news conference San Cristobal Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia said that they are awaiting a positive reply from subversive groups to the start of negotiations and an end to the armed confrontations.

[Begin Ruiz recording] We proposed contributing our recognized moral influence; all three of us agree with that service proposal. The mediation process will depend on the parties' behavior. We hope to be able to reach the party that declared war to find out whether it accepts our mediation.

What follows? We do not know, because that depends on the circumstances. All we can do is voice our willingness to serve as mediators. We will not hold talks with them, only serve as mediators of a dialogue. [end recording]

The three bishops said they deeply regret the developments at the start of 1994. Deputy Government Secretary Ricardo Garcia Villalobos has reported that the Mexican Government is willing to hold talks with representatives of the subversive groups to settle this problem.

Salinas Comments; Advocates Dialogue

PA0301202094 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1920 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Report by Elizabeth Diaz Otero at Los Pinos presidential residence in Mexico City—live]

[Text] President Carlos Salinas de Gortari today issued an appeal to find points of consensus and a solution to all demands through dialogue and respect for the law in

reference to the conflict in central and eastern Chiapas State, where Indian groups took up arms early on New Year's Day.

The president recognized that there are shortages and inequalities in Chiapas and that benefits and opportunities are not a reality for many, but he insisted that in recent years there have been earnest efforts to reverse the inequality that has prevailed for centuries in this zone of our country.

The following is part of the president's message regarding the violent conflicts in Chiapas.

[Begin Salinas recording] Let us never forget that we will be able to find points of consensus and solutions to all demands only through a dialogue within a legal framework. Let there be no doubt; no region in Mexico has differences that surpass our ability to settle them in a dialogue, nor is there a gap capable of dividing our essential unity.

Violent actions obstruct true solutions to social needs and cast a shadow on the settlement of disputes. Politics and frank communication allow us to get to the bottom of differences, just as joint efforts meet social demands. Solutions are found and provided. Mexico has no place or time for disputes that are not settled within a legal framework.

I reassert: We will always strive to defend the law and peaceful dialogue—particularly for the defense of human rights and all the community's actions—in Mexico. [end recording]

President Carlos Salinas spoke to congressional legislators who visited him on Monday. The legislators met with Salinas for two reasons: to notify him about the conclusion of their period of sessions and to confirm their support for the nation's institutions given the violence that has arisen in the southern part of the country.

The president, accompanied by Government Secretary Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido—who, by the way, has remained silent in recent days—emphasized that an essential unity among Mexicans prevails over pluralism and ideological differences. He said everyone is obligated to sponsor this unity as an expression of his love for the fatherland. The ceremony was held at the Venustiano Carranza Room in Los Pinos. Maria de los Angeles Moreno Uriega, chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' commission, outlined the National Congress' position concerning the events in Chiapas.

[Begin Moreno recording] The deputies who make up all the legislative factions and fellow senators who participated in the 55th legislative period have asked me to express their concern about the events in Chiapas and to state their strong rejection of the attitude assumed by armed groups that have resorted to violence in an attempt to justify it as a method to solve problems that involve and affect various groups of Mexicans.

Likewise, the legislators express their conviction that we will continue to find peaceful solutions—within the framework of the law and national constitution—that will allow us to continue toward the achievement of specific social welfare goals, which is our shared goal and in which so much has been achieved in this phase for the sake of the republic. [end recording]

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari will receive various groups throughout the day. This morning he was visited by his closest aides. Representatives of various groups have also arrived and will continue to arrive for the New Year celebrations.

Guatemala Institutes 'Strict' Border Security

PA0301200094 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1927 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Report by Carlos Arce]

[Text] We have a last minute report that the Guatemalan Armed Forces has implemented strict security measures along the border with Mexico.

Guatemalan Armed Forces Spokesperson Edith Vargas indicated that a military contingent was mobilized to the common border to prevent the flow of weapons. Likewise, she deplored the events initiated by an armed group in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

Meanwhile, Chiapas official spokespersons revealed that the Mexican Armed Forces practically have the situation in La Margaritas and Ocosingo under control. However, the situation is still confusing in Altamirano. In addition, official sources have refused to confirm or deny reports that Governor Absalon Castellanos has been kidnapped.

Rebels Said To Reject Talks With Government

PA0301223894 Paris AFP in Spanish 2115 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Report by Gerardo Tena]

[Text] Altamirano, Mexico, 3 Jan (AFP)—The Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN) guerrillas will not hold talks with the Mexican Government and will continue its war "until obtaining victory," several rebel leaders said today when interviewed in towns under their control.

The leaders said they are seeking to establish socialism in Mexico through an armed struggle for which they have prepared for the past 24 years.

Reaching the territory occupied by the EZLN, which made its public appearance on 1 January, is no easy task, because there are several rebel checkpoints manned by Indians who speak Spanish with difficulty and collect a "war tax" of approximately $17 for each media vehicle crossing it.

The first EZLN checkpoints are about 25 km from San Cristobal de las Casas on the road to Ocosingo, in northern Chiapas State, which neighbors with Guatemala.

At those rebel checkpoints the guerrilla Indians are blocking access to Ocosingo, warning that civilians cannot go there, because EZLN and Mexican Army troops are clashing.

The rebels control about 65 km of highway, along which there are several checkpoints, up to the town of Altamirano, which has approximately 15,000 inhabitants.

"Eliseo," who is about 20 years old and who wears a ski cap, said that he has been a member of this organization for five years and that it has conducted exercises all over the country. He denied that the EZLN has ties to other armed movements abroad.

"It is we Mexicans who organized: there are teachers, peasants, and laborers among our companeros. There are also church people; we are mostly Catholic," Eliseo said when interviewed at the rebel checkpoint in Huistan.

"If the government wants negotiation, we will reject it; we want them to leave leadership in the people's hands," he added.

Along the road leading to Ocosingo, where fierce clashes are taking place according to various sources, people can be seen fleeing with their belongings on their backs in search of an escape route.

The rebels, who are visibly nervous, are closely monitoring every movement in the area, especially vehicles, and are ready to fire.

In Oxchuc, which has about 37,000 inhabitants and is also under subversives' control, the residents are quietly complaining about the situation, because they are unable to leave town in public transportation vehicles, because the EZLN has "borrowed" them.

Oxchuc resident Ruperto Jimenez said that that town only has enough food for three days and that people fear for their lives if there were Army-rebel clashes.

"We are EZLN members in honor of our hero Emiliano Zapata (leader of the 1910 revolution), and we are seeking to impose socialism," said a rebel "captain" stationed in Cuxulja.

The rebel, who identified himself as "captain," is about 1.6 meters tall and armed with an AK-47 rifle. He said that his organization was established in the city in 1969 and was later transferred to the mountains, where "we became guerrillas and are now an army."

In Altamira the rebels have occupied the square and a hospital run by nuns of the congregation Sisters of Charity, who are taking care of eight men, six rebels, and two policemen injured during combat.

Planes and Mexican Air Force helicopters frequently overfly the conflict area.

Ex-Clandestine People's Party Dissociates Self From Rebels

PA0301233194 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2137 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] Mexico City, 3 Jan (EFE)—The former Revolutionary Workers Clandestine People's Union Party (Procup) dissociated itself from the rebel Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN), which has revolted in Chiapas State, Mexico.

Maria Vera, a former Procup member imprisoned since 1990, said in statements published by the newspaper EL FINANCIERO today, Monday, that Procup backs the EZLN armed movement although it has no relations with them. "The EZLN has our acceptance and moral support. We are sure other armed groups will salute, in their own way, the struggle of the companions in Chiapas," she stated.

The government's only option is a political one. The situation will become very critical if it represses the EZLN and the people of Chiapas, she added. In her opinion, the government is interested in presenting an image of a country with social and political stability due to the start up of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This is the only explanation for the government's willingness to negotiate with the rebels, Vera added.

She believes the EZLN's appearance is one of the most important events for the armed struggle in Mexico, and she warned that the confrontations in Chiapas could generate similar actions in other parts of the country. "This is due to the fact that there are large sectors of the population that live under conditions of extreme poverty similar to those in Chiapas," the former guerrilla said. It will be very difficult, she said, for the government to choose an increase in "its low-intensity war against the people and to annihilate the Zapatist army, as such actions would have a high political cost."

Vera revealed that she had heard reports on the formation of a guerrilla movement—although it had not proclaimed itself as the EZLN—in the Chiapas region for several years. She said that the clashes in Chiapas could prompt rebel movements to arise in Mexico; events have shown that the EZLN has an authentic belligerent character in the country.

Procup has its roots in the guerrilla movements that developed in the southern State of Guerrero during the 1970's. The group was allegedly headed by former Oaxaca University Director Felipe Martinez Soriano, who is imprisoned for his responsibility in the attack against the Mexican newspaper LA JORNADA, in which two guards lost their lives, in April 1990.

Government Reports 'Greater Calm' in Chiapas

PA0401013694 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 3 Jan 94

["Special Report" by Rosie Ahuatxil from the Government Secretariat in Mexico City]

[Text] The Government Secretariat reports that the situation in Chiapas State is one of greater calm now and that the incidents there have not led to disturbances in the other states of the country.

Under Secretary Socorro Diaz Palacios has said that during the last few months of 1993 there was information about illegal activities by small groups in that border area, but the special circumstances of the region's underdevelopment forced the authorities to act with special prudence and caution; nevertheless, Socorro Diaz Palacios added, the situation is returning to normal in Chiapas State. Here is what she said:

[Begin Diaz recording] In San Cristobal de las Casas and Ocosingo, two of the four municipal capitals that were violently attacked, the situation is of greater calm now. They are free of the aggressor groups, and civilian authorities are on the way to fully assuming their duties. These events have not produced any disturbances in the other states of the Republic. [end recording]

Diaz said also that the local authorities' response was to protect the civilian population and that the Mexican Army, with great prudence, did not act the first day. The authorities did not execute actions whose consequences might have led to the loss of more civilian lives in these towns. Diaz said something interesting; she said the violent groups that are acting in Chiapas State present a mixture of both national and foreign interests and individuals. They show an affinity toward other violent factions that operate in brother countries of Central America. Some Indians, Diaz said, have been recruited and pressured by the leaders of these groups, and their historic demands, which must continue to be heard, have undoubtedly been manipulated. The Federal Government, she said, has affirmed that its conduct will continue to be based on the law and in the defense of the people's security. It has also reiterated to all the inhabitants of the region the proposal for dialogue to further advance in providing attention to the needs of that and other state regions.

Armed Forces Reinforce Troops by 6,000

PA0401002994 Paris AFP in Spanish 2341 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] Mexico City, 3 Jan (AFP)—The Mexican Army has 12,000 soldiers who are "trying to repel the uprising" of Indians of the Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN), initiated on 1 January in the southern State of Chiapas, the newspaper ULTIMAS NOTICIAS reported this Monday.

The Armed Forces have reinforced their troops with 6,000 soldiers in the area of conflict, where there were already a number of soldiers prior to the EZLN-launched offensive, the newspaper stated, not citing its sources.

This report has not yet been officially confirmed.

According to Chiapas authorities, the guerrillas "are just a few," possibly some 400, but estimates made by journalists who have traveled to the region list the EZLN members at between 800 and 1,000.

A guerrilla has told the press that his troops consist of approximately 5,000 men.

The area of conflict is located approximately 700 km south of Mexico City.

Government Admits 'Significant' Underdevelopment

PA0401024694 Mexico City Radio Acir Network in Spanish 2348 GMT 3 Jan 94

["Special Report" by Elizabeth Diaz Sotero from the official Los Pinos presidential residence—live]

[Text] Social Development Secretary Carlos Rojas Gutierrez met with President Carlos Salinas here at Los Pinos this afternoon. After that meeting, Rojas read before local and foreign media representatives a three-page communique admitting that there is a significant social and ancestral underdevelopment in Chiapas State.

He assured that this state occupied first place in the government's social investment over the past five years. Rojas said that the secretariat under his responsibility—that is, the Social Development Secretariat—by order of President Salinas will continue its dialogue with various social organizations of the jungle area, the Chiapas border area, Catholic Church bishops, and members of other churches to continue projects that have been carried out in the past few years. These projects were defined by the authorities mainly with the participation of regional social groups. Let's listen to a portion of the communique that Secretary Rojas read this afternoon at Los Pinos:

[Begin Rojas recording] Due to the violent incidents that occurred on 1 January, the government of the Republic reaffirms its willingness to establish new means to settle the problems of the jungle area and border areas of that state; in this regard, President Carlos Salinas has instructed us to make additional efforts to reach this goal.

A group of officials will visit Chiapas State to establish a discussion table, along with Governor (Elmar Checher), to address the regional social problems, to review, along with the various social organizations, the progress made by the agreed upon works, to review technical files, to (?discuss) production works and projects that will be carried out, and to define new actions for this year, as was agreed upon previously with regional groups.

I would like to point out that for the Federal Government Chiapas State is top priority. We know of the ancestral social underdevelopment affecting it, and this is why it occupies first place in social investment of the national Solidarity Program. During the past five years of the current administration, Chiapas received 8 percent of the total national investment. Social investment grew by more than 1,000 percent during this period. [end recording]

Secretary Rojas mentioned some figures reflecting the magnitude of the efforts made in the past years. Eighty first-rate centers and rural medical units and hospitals in Huitzia and Mapastepec were built. More than 4,000 schools were incorporated into the (Digna) school program, and 1,900 school rooms and 108 laboratories were built. About 3,000 km of roads and highways were built. More than 1,200 communities and low-income settlements have electricity today. Five hundred water and drainage systems were built and rehabilitated in 65 municipalities. More than 90,000 peasants received credits without collateral [credito a la palabra] to cultivate 150,000 hectares. The 110 town councils of the state have municipality funds from the Solidarity Program to meet the people's most urgent needs. Nineteen regional Indian funds were established to support the production projects of the ethnic groups.

Carlos Rojas added that to face the drop in the international price of coffee—a problem that has worsened economic problems in the Chiapas highlands—the government has supported 60,000 growers who face this difficult situation. The secretary said that in Chiapas there has been a willingness to hold talks and conciliatory efforts; he added that this has led to the solution of agrarian problems such as those in Venustiano Carranza, Simojovel, and (Huiztiupan).

Rojas said that there was progress in the efforts to reach a consensus with the groups residing near the jungle and its original inhabitants. This unprecedented effort, according to Carlos Rojas, has reduced the number of landless peasants in Chiapas State. Let's continue to listen to Secretary Rojas:

[Begin Rojas recording] Despite the great efforts made by the state and federal governments and by the state social groups, there are areas where demographic growth and the deterioration of natural resources have worsened social problems. [end recording]

Secretary Rojas read the document and left the Venustiano Carranza Room with no other comment.

Rebels Maintaining Presence in at Least 5 Towns

PA0401021294 Paris AFP in Spanish 0108 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Text] San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico, 3 Jan (AFP)—According to various sources, the Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN) is maintaining a guerrilla presence today in at least five towns of the southern State of Chiapas, leaving four mayors offices violently occupied in the past few days.

Rafael Gonzalez Lastra, the Chiapas Government secretary general, has told a news conference that the EZLN "aggressors" left the mayors offices in Las Margaritas and Chanal today and that Mexican Army troops are in the city of Comitan, south of San Cristobal, to guarantee peace.

The EZLN forces violently seized the mayors offices in San Cristobal de las Casas, Las Margaritas, Chanal, Altamirano, and Ocosingo on 1 January in what constituted a violent guerrilla outbreak.

The guerrillas left San Cristobal on 2 January and moved toward Rancho Nuevo, where they have sustained several clashes with the troops stationed at the 31st Military Zone Garrison.

The EZLN presence continues in Ocosingo, where there have been clashes, and Altamirano, Oxchuch, Huiztan, and Cuxulja, which they occupied on Sunday.

Certain reports stated that a group of rebels has taken over Guadalupe Tepeyac, in Las Margaritas Municipality.

Gonzalez Lastra said he trusts that order will be reestablished in Ocosingo and Altamirano "within the next few hours."

Media reports, which authorities have not confirmed, state that the troops arrested 12 civilians in Comitan. Near the city an EZLN unit kidnapped former Chiapas Governor Absalon Castellanos on Sunday. His whereabouts are unknown.

Said To Withdraw

PA0401031994 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0111 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Text] Comitan (Mexico), 3 Jan (EFE)—The Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN) withdrew today from Las Margaritas, Chiapas State, and announced a summary trial against former Governor Absalon Castellanos Dominguez.

The rebels controlled Las Margaritas after occupying the town on 1 January and withdrew early on 3 January, journalists who arrived there after they had left told EFE.

The journalists said when leaving the town they saw the corpses of Police Commander Berlain Perez Perez and a guerrilla at the Union de Uniones Building.

A rebel identified as "Major Moises" told the journalists that General Castellanos, who was kidnapped on 2 January, will be judged in a summary trial at their general garrison for "repressing the people."

"He will not be freed. He already enjoyed freedom and will be executed," the rebel told the journalists who managed to enter Las Margaritas.

He reiterated that his organization "will remain armed and will fight to the death. We are determined. We are not demanding negotiations; we have declared war on the Army."

Meanwhile. the almost 120,000 inhabitants of Comitan are living hours of terror tonight, fearing the town, located 15 minutes from Las Margaritas, could be attacked by the rebels posted in the surrounding areas.

Helicopters and "Pilatus" type planes are constantly overflying Comitan, and the Army has reinforced security in public buildings and access roads to the city.

Peasant Organizations Reject Violence

PA0401033594 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 0127 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Report by Marcela Gutierrez]

[Text] Peasant organizations of the Permanent Agrarian Congress [Congreso Agrario Permanente] rejected today the outbreak of violence in Chiapas State but agreed in saying that the armed struggle is the result of the poverty and neglect in which the peasants from that region must live.

Jose Luis Gonzalez Aguilera, coordinator of the Permanent Agrarian Congress, has said that the problems of the Indian groups will not be resolved with weapons but admitted that the violence that prevails in Chiapas is the product of increased poverty and, often, the systematic repression that these social groups have had to endure.

Gonzalez did not disregard the possibility of the Zapata National Liberation Army being led by Guatemalan guerrillas.

Meanwhile, Jose Luis Hernandez, a peasant leader from the Independent Central Organization of Agricultural Workers and Peasants [CIOAC], has said that the problem can be resolved by establishing a truce between the government and the armed group.

[Begin Hernandez recording] We completely reject an Army intervention to give this matter any kind of military or police treatment, because this is not what this is about. These people are not criminals committing a crime; they are human beings demanding justice. [end recording]

Meanwhile, Alvaro Lopez, a leader of the National Union of Agricultural Workers [UNTA], and Ignacio Iris Salomon, of (Coduc) [not further identified] has called on the parties to resolve the armed conflict as soon as possible, because it represents a threat to the country's social stability on the eve of the August 1994 federal elections.

Chiapas Governor Requests Army Intervention

PA0401034794 Mexico City Radio Acir Network in Spanish 0157 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Report by Rosi Ahuatxil]

[Text] Chiapas Governor (Elmar Checher) has requested the protection of the powers of the union and the intervention of the Mexican Army to settle once and for all the violence prevailing in the State of Chiapas and, of course, to prevent more bloodshed.

(Checher) has said that the government's concern has been to make the civilian population a priority, and this is why the national Army had not intervened earlier as the subversives were occupying San Cristobal de las Casas.

He urged the people to act prudently to avoid being controlled by panic and rumors and to facilitate the work of the national Army to reinforce the protection and security of the affected towns.

(Checher) has said that government efforts to establish a dialogue have not been well received, and this shall be construed as defiance and contempt toward the institutions; this, he added, has changed his attitude on the actions that should be adopted to immediately restore order, peace, and tranquility, which have always prevailed in the State of Chiapas.

Thus, the governor has urged the population to remain calm. He said that with the government's leadership, Chiapas society will continue to improve its standard of living with strength, firmness, and enthusiasm, and with the dignity of a people who know where they are headed, because they have a well-defined course and fate.

This was the message of encouragement issued by the governor of Chiapas State to his people.

Armed Forces Retake Town

PA0401041994 Paris AFP in Spanish 0345 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Text] Mexico City, 3 Jan (AFP)—A government source has reported that the Mexican Armed Forces retook control of the town of Ocosingo in southern Chiapas State this afternoon. It had been under the control of Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN) guerrillas since 1 January.

Chiapas Government Under Secretary Julio Cesar Cancino has told television media that Altamirano is the only town in the hands of the "criminals" (guerrillas). The official did not provide details on the recovery of Ocosingo or the number of Army and rebel casualties during more than 24 hours of fighting.

The authorities have only admitted the presence of EZLN rebels in four municipal capitals (San Cristobal, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, and Altamirano). Meanwhile, media sources has reported there was guerrilla presence

in five other towns: Chanal, Oxchuc, Huiztan, Cuxulja, and Rancho Nuevo. Cancino said that the Mexican Army is protecting the highways leading to Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of Chiapas, where "many rumors" have been heard about the activities of EZLN members.

He stressed the possibility that the strife-torn situation in Chiapas as a result of the violent appearance of the EZLN will end 4 January.

Two Hundred Said Killed, 500 Wounded

PA0401062394 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0539 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Text] Tuxtla Gutierrez (Mexico), 4 Jan (EFE)—The Armed Forces have recovered four towns that had been occupied by the Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN) after 48 hours of clashes and skirmishes that unofficially have left almost 200 people dead and 500 injured.

The rebels left their positions in Oxchuc and Las Margaritas, while the Mexican Army expelled them from San Cristobal and Oconsingo, in northern and northeastern Chiapas State.

Sources close to the Chiapas government have told EFE that it can be said unofficially that 200 people were killed, including rebels, civilians, and soldiers, and 500 were wounded during the past three days of conflict since the EZLN attacked several towns in Chiapas.

They added that 25 rebels were captured during the military operations and that apparently one of them is "Commander Marcos," who appeared in a picture talking to the press at the San Cristobal mayor's office, which was reproduced by Mexican newspapers.

Guatemala

Army Spokesperson Hints of URNG Role in Mexican Rebellion

PA0301211394 Guatemala City Teleonce Television in Spanish 1900 GMT 3 Jan 94

[From the "Telepress" newscast]

[Text] The Guatemalan Army does not yet have official information on the armed rebellion in Chiapas State, Mexico. Edith Vargas de Marroquin, spokesperson for the Army Information and Press Department, [words indistinct] and added that the participation of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity [URNG] in this movement:

[Begin recording] [Marroquin] The Guatemalan Army does not yet have an official report [words indistinct] Mexican Government. The Foreign Ministry and the Mexican Embassy in this country will [words indistinct]. The Army is maintaining its security along the Mexican border and other border areas [words indistinct].

[Unidentified reporter] [Words indistinct]

[Marroquin] For the time being there is no [word indistinct] situation.

[Reporter] [Words indistinct]

[Marroquin] We are maintaining communications [words indistinct] with the Mexican Army [words indistinct].

[Reporter] [Words indistinct]?

[Marroquin] We learned about that through the media; as I said, we do not have an official report or an official version of the (?incident). The information we have was obtained through the media.

[Reporter] [Words indistinct]

[Marroquin] We think that it could be that the URNG, given the (?warmongering position) it has maintained for so long, is somehow participating in this regretful situation [words indistinct] many high-caliber weapons were seized. It could be inferred that they were not only to arm URNG members but to arm a clandestine (?group). This arms cache was accidentally discovered [words indistinct] other caches. [end recording]

URNG Rejects Army Report

PA0401014794 Paris AFP in Spanish 0041 GMT 4 Jan 93

[Text] Mexico City, 3 Jan (AFP)—The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) said today that it "totally and absolutely rejects" the Guatemalan Army's report on the URNG's alleged links with the Zapata National Liberation Army (EZLN), which began an armed struggle in Mexico on 1 January.

Luis Becker, a member of the URNG's political-diplomatic commission, told AFP that "the report (issued by the Guatemalan Army) aims to misinform to create confusion and problems."

He insisted there are no links between the URNG and EZLN, and he stressed that "we absolutely respect the political situation (in Mexico), and therefore we refrain" from issuing an opinion on the emergence of the guerrilla movement in Chiapas State in southern Mexico.

In Guatemala, the Army said today, there "are signs" the URNG "might be involved" with the guerrilla EZLN, which is occupying several towns in southern Mexico.

Becker said he does not know whether the "disinformation" seeks to prevent the return of thousands of Guatemalan refugees who live in Chiapas and other southern Mexican states and who for several months have been preparing to return to their places of origin.

The Guatemalan guerrillas, who are planning to hold a round of peace negotiations with the Guatemalan Government on 6 January, have said that they will issue a communique "later" on the "disinformation" spread by the Army about their links with the EZLN. The EZLN has said there are no foreigners in their movement and that their members come from various Mexican locations.

Nicaragua

* Failures, Successes in Factories Noted

94P20172A

[Editorial Report] Managua BARRICADA in Spanish of 28 November 1993 on page 5 reports that the El Caracol Enterprise, which was turned over to 100 workers in 1990, still employs all 100 employees, who receive as benefits a basic market basket, transportation, a uniform, shoes, and medical care. The market basket includes 20 pounds of rice, 20 pounds of sugar, six bars of soap, 10 pounds of beans, and a gallon of oil. The article reports that workers earn between 600 and 900 cordobas per month. According to Ronaldo Rodriguez, president of the enterprise's board of directors, El Caracol sells 130,000 to 170,000 pounds of grain per month, and has set a goal of 200,000 pounds for December.

Managua BARRICADA of 6 December 1993 on page 14 reports that the footwear factory Rolter will be shut down temporarily due to financial problems caused by smuggling and taxes. Assistant Manager Francisco Lacayo explains that the factory cannot compete with smugglers who pay no import tax while the factory is forced to pay a 17-percent sales tax to Managua City Hall. Lacayo says that the tax is "excessively high" for a product which is included in the basic market basket. According to the article, the enterprise's 240 workers, most of whom are single mothers, understand the factory "is going through hard times" and hope that it will reopen in a few months.

*** Economists View Impact of FTA**

94P20173A

[Editorial Report] Managua BARRICADA in Spanish of 6 December 1993 on page 15 reports that, according to Oscar Aleman of the Foreign Ministry's Foreign Trade Department, if Nicaragua signs a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Mexico, it will ba able to participate indirectly in NAFTA. He reasons that an agreement with Mexico will favor Nicaragua because Nicaragua's labor force is cheaper that Mexico's. Aleman believes that as Mexico prospers under NAFTA, it will become more open to buying Nacaraguan products, which will not have to reach the same level of quality as they do for sale to the United States. Aleman expects that Nicaragua will continue to export goods to the United States under NAFTA. Nicaragua currently exports to the United States $17 million worth of goods.

Carlos Reynaldo Lacayo, a member of the American Chamber of Commerce, explains that joining the FTA will not solve thge country's problems. He calls on the government to establish fiscal, monetary, and credit policies to allow businessmen to modernize equipment and update technology in order to be more competitive. Lacayo explains that political and social stability and a new labor code are also necessary to stimulate investment.

Argentina

Menem Rules Out Justicialist, Radical Coalition in 1995

PY0301212594 Buenos Aires BUENOS AIRES HERALD in English 2 Jan 94 pp 1, 4

[Text] (DYN-NA)—President Carlos Menem yesterday [1 January] denied the possibility that a coalition government could be formed in 1995 by factions of the ruling Justicialist Party and the opposition Radicals, despite the fact that they have reached a deal on constitutional reform because the differences between the two remained too great.

"We can agree on political issues but the lack of similarities in the economic field will make that kind of government impossible," Menem said in his native La Rioja.

The president's comments were prompted by an interview with Radical Party (UCR) Chairman Raul Alfonsin published by the Buenos Aires newspaper LA NACION on Friday [31 December].

In the article, Alfonsin suggested that "all those who want to defend the overall plan that will be an alternative to the neoconservative model" followed by the Menem administration join together to form a coalition government when the next presidential and congressional elections are held.

Among potential members of his group, Alfonsin said, was "the large portion of the Justicialist Party that is opposed to the policies that (the government) is carrying out."

Alfonsin also spoke out in favour of the idea of continuing in favour of the idea of continuing the dialogue begun between the UCR and the government on constitutional reform to address issues such as education and foreign policy, "where we will also debate quite a bit."

"This moment in Argentina should by symbolized by the word dialogue," said Alfonsin.

However, Menem appeared unwavering in his attempt to stress the differences between his party and the UCR.

Agreement on economic matters, said the head of state was impossible because "the Radicals continue to support an economic system like that which led to the situation we experienced in July 1989, which was uncontrollable."

Menem stressed that his administration would not stray from the economic course it had charted. "While my government lasts a devaluation of the peso is impossible; thus the exchange parity (between the peso and the United States dollar) will remain unchanged."

The President also lauded the successes his government had logged last year.

"Nineteen ninety-three has been one of the most brilliant years for the Argentine Republic with the consolidation of the democratic process beginning with the accord" on constitutional reform signed last month by Menem and former president Alfonsin.

In addition Menem noted, "The country grew at a rate of nearly seven percent at the same time as the poverty indicators decreased and unemployment showed a tendency to decline."

Menem noted that between May and October 1993 unemployment dropped 0.6 percent from a record-high 9.9 percent. "It's a small decrease," said the President, "but it marks a tendency for this year."

Labour Ministry figures released on Friday that show an increase in unemployment between October 1992 and last October to 9.3 percent from seven percent.

While still in La Rioja Menem also asserted that last month's riot in Santiago del Estero was fomented by "agitators who have infiltrated the province" and may also be doing so in other provinces.

New Defense Ministry Under Secretaries Installed

PY0301224294 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2111 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] Buenos Aires, 3 Jan (NA)—Jorge Baeza, the Defense Ministry's new military affairs secretary, today installed Ricardo Lagorio as policy and strategy under secretary and Roberto Ahumada as institutional affairs under secretary.

Thus Lagorio and Ahumada succeed Virgilio Beltran and Eduardo De Simone, whose resignations were accepted by the Executive Branch.

Defense Ministry Planning Secretary Guillermo Etchechoury and ministry departmental directors participated in the ceremony.

Bolivia

Danish Development Minister Arrives To Discuss Cooperation

PY0401112394 La Paz Television Nacional Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 4 Jan 94

[Text] Danish Development Minister Helle Degn has arrived in our country. She is optimistic about the possibility that our country might become the beneficiary of significant financial support.

Danish economic cooperation with our country was discontinued after [former Bolivian dictator Luis] Garcia Meza's coup in 1980. The cooperation agreement was not restored for over a decade. Bolivia may now be a Latin American country chosen to receive financial support from this Nordic country.

[Begin Degn recording in Danish with superimposed translation into Spanish, in progress] ...actually much interest, and eager to visit the cooperation projects between Denmark and Bolivia. [end recording]

Asked why the cooperation had been discontinued for such a long time, the minister explained that Denmark had waited for democracy to be solidly established in our country.

Bolivia is, however, not the only country hoping for this financial assistance. [passage indistinct]

With the goal of convincing the Danish Government of our country's various needs, Vice President Victor Hugo Cardenas will join Minister Degn in traveling to Beni Department and the plateau region.

[Begin Cardenas recording] In our governmental agenda this cooperation is required, especially in the fields of agriculture, craftsmanship, the advancement of women, educational reform, dairy products—an area in which they have already been supporting us in a significant manner—and other areas that our country may propose to Denmark.

I have discovered that she has an extremely positive attitude toward cooperation with our country. These three days will be dedicated to talking with her in depth to convince her—and convince the Danish people—of resuming and normalizing their cooperation with our country.

I hope the rains will allow us to have an uneventful and successful trip. [end recording]

The Danish minister was optimistic. She also visited Bolivian Foreign Minister Antonio Aranibar and Economic Development Minister Fernando Romero.

Danish cooperation will be earmarked in particular for social programs. If positive results are achieved, it will involve $20 million.

* Head of New Secretariat Discusses Goals

94SM0146A La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish
12 Nov 93 p 2

[Interview with Martha Garcia Ferrufino, head of the Secretariat of Provincial and Rural Development, at her office; date not given—first five paragraphs are PRESENCIA introduction]

[Text] Last 6 August, during the ceremony of taking office, the first Aymara vice president of the republic, Victor Hugo Cardenas, said that "after 500 years of colonial silence and 168 years of exclusion, we are speaking up to tell our truth."

This seems to be the tone that has been adopted in the new National Secretariat for Provincial and Rural Development, the mission of which is to "raise the standard of living for rural inhabitants at a significantly greater rate than that of the rest of the Bolivian population, and expand the relationship between rural inhabitants and the authorities at all levels."

The head of this office, Martha Garcia Ferrufino—the only woman at that level of the Executive Branch—has worked for the last 10 years with peasants in Mizque, Carrasco, Puna, and Tiraque provinces, through the nongovernmental organization [NGO] Center for Agricultural and Livestock Development (Cedeagro), of which she was the director.

The interview that follows was carried out in her office at the National Service for Community Development. One's attention is called to the fact that on the walls there are no traditional portraits of leaders of past administrations, but rather maps, papers, and blackboards full of innumerable notes.

Her enthusiasm in explaining her plans was only tempered when she remembered her activities in the Cochabamba valley where, she is certain, she will return after fulfilling her new mission.

[PRESENCIA] In general terms, what are the objectives of the National Secretariat for Provincial and Rural Development?

[Martha Garcia] They involve turning government strategies and policies around toward an environment that is normally forgotten: the rural areas. The provinces are slowly languishing, they have no economic, social, or cultural prospects in the face of the indifference of the city people and the State.

I believe that a small space has opened up in this government—that of the Secretariat of Provincial and Rural Development, and of Ethnic, Racial, and Generational Affairs—to be able to resolve, or at least to facilitate, a process of development that brings confidence and energy to the rural population, to be a tool for their future.

[PRESENCIA] The distinction between province and community is important. In general, the villages have always had conflicts with the communities, how do you view that?

[Martha Garcia] When the President said that we all belong to an ethnic group, he stated a truth. We all belong to an ethnic group—Quechua, Aymara, Guarani, Chiquitana, Mojena, etc.—but also, after 168 years of the Republic, we have another reference, of legal, geographic scope, which is the province.

What is in the province? The indigenous-peasant community and the residents of its capital cities and its sections and cantons. But now most of the indigenous groups and peasants have moved to these capitals, because their former employers have been abandoning their family estates.

Thus, an almost unified, uniform, and homogenous movement has now developed in the rural area, which

does not deny that there must be a level of cooperation between the villages, which are disappearing, and the communities, which look to these small capitals for their economic reference of commercial transactions.

[PRESENCIA] How are you carrying out the work?

[Martha Garcia] By focusing on what the province is, based on diagnostics made by its own inhabitants, for them to be the first to make a reading of the reality of their corresponding provincial jurisdiction.

This means that the inhabitants, at each administrative level, are carrying out a census of their natural resources, to determine how many people are they, who they are, to what culture they belong, where they are located, and what type of production and prospects they have. That is the first thing they should do, to give them the information to also permit them to objectively define what their needs are and develop strategies to respond.

I insist that the Secretariat of Rural Development aim to promote activities permitting very flexible proposals to be defined for provincial, global, and also local development in the provinces, beginning with their own inhabitants, and to expand these into the microregions where there are calls for unified efforts to resolve the problems.

[PRESENCIA] How will the peasant community become involved in this process, given its diversity and the existence of internal and conflicting authorities within the provinces themselves?

[Martha Garcia] One must start with the fact that there is a basic organization in the rural area that must be respected and with which one must cooperate. I am speaking of the ayllu, which is a natural organization; and the peasant syndicate, which is structured and has a hierarchical order.

Then, we want to enter in a fashion that is objective and honest, for once, to help resolve the problems of the communities while respecting their structural organizations: ayllus, communal syndicates, subcentrals; in the case of the Guaranis, their assemblies. It is necessary to respond within these contexts, because they have their own ideas of what the local transformation must be and the definition of the services they require.

[PRESENCIA] What are the objectives of the Secretariat you are heading, for the next four years?

[Martha Garcia] A very dynamic action program will be carried out in the provinces to establish local organizations that will initially be called Provincial Development Councils.

The Councils shall be charged with getting political society to work with civil society in each of the provinces. In fact, there already are political authorities (sub-prefectures and mayoralties) and civil authorities, peasant organizations (ayllus or assemblies; unions, and their expression in centrals and sub-centrals), and civic committees.

This should permit the design of the provincial development strategy, and the authorities must monitor the process of transforming the education, health, and productive sectors, and provide working guidelines for all the entities doing development work in the provinces.

I am referring to the NGO's, Churches, FF.AA [Armed Forces], etc., which must all act according to the same guidelines. Currently, some projects are in a state of chaos; anyone may enter a given geographical environment and establish direct contact, without anyone monitoring them or ensuring compatibility with a global proposal.

In summary, the trend is that each province communicate with the authorities to coordinate systems, strategies and control, and even to monitor the different tasks as they are completed, in such a way as to respect the strategy the province itself has laid out, avoiding isolated activities by either public or private entities.

[PRESENCIA] In the Executive Branch's new structure, rural areas are divided among three ministries: Human Development, Finance, and Sustainable Development. The latter also has authority over the Institute for Colonization and the National Council for Agrarian Reform. How will your work be compatible?

[Martha Garcia] Coordination among the three ministries must be of a complementary nature, of common effort with respect to the strategies that will be designed.

Some of them are regulatory in nature, while others support and strengthen the activities that are carried out throughout the entire rural environment, and I repeat that the objective is to serve the provinces, even though there may be differences of focus on what the territory should be, or which actions correspond to cultural expressions, etc. The goal is to respond in an integrated fashion to the needs of the rural inhabitants.

I do not believe there will be conflicts, but rather that we will complement each other.

[PRESENCIA] But, for example, if the Ministry of Sustainable Development declares a tax reserve in a zone where you have decided to bring new land into production, doesn't that create a conflict between the two?

[Martha Garcia] What we are doing is making the proposals compatible and defining what the activities of the three Ministries will be within those zones, which may in fact create conflict.

Let us look at the other side. For example, the case of natural resources. The Ministry of Sustainable Development will regulate their use throughout the country, but it is the rural inhabitants who will apply those regulations. But this not only involves conservation, but reproduction of the natural resources in a sustainable fashion.

[PRESENCIA] Another potential conflict is between business-agricultural-livestock interests and peasants

organized in unions or communities in the same area. How will you address that reality?

[Martha Garcia] This is dealt with in the legal area; that is, how the large farmers and ranchers will be treated, as well as the small farmers living in the same zone.

For the rest, reality shows significant conflicts in our country: one can see signs of wealth and misery side by side.

How to carry out activities in those areas? With respect to our areas of responsibility, this involves small farmers beginning to have a healthier and better consolidated economy, to permit them to live in a more comfortable and modern fashion.

The objective—as the minister of Sustainable Development has said—will first be to save the small farmer, to try to resolve the basic problems. Then, serve the large ranchers and farmers. In any case, there will be certain restrictions on everyone—both small and large farmers—particularly with respect to the preservation of natural resources, the forests. Neither large nor small farmers may diminish our national endowment.

[PRESENCIA] How do the different secretariats in the Ministry of Human Development coordinate with each other, particularly when several carry out direct activities in the rural area?

[Martha Garcia] The secretariats, jointly and in agreement with each other, will design the activities and proposals. Moreover, these will also be agreed upon as an axis with the local participants, particularly in the health, education, and productive sectors.

For example, if in the provinces where, together with the local population, we are carrying out work we deem necessary, involving the creation of five school districts, that means the Secretariat of Education should be involved there. What is important is that the definition and geographical coordination of activities be developed locally rather than by the Secretariats.

[PRESENCIA] In the area of education, are the proposals of the Educational Reform Support Team and your Secretariat compatible?

[Martha Garcia] I believe that the problems are being resolved. The educational reform proposal is being evaluated by all the Secretariats of the Ministry, which are reviewing its defects and weaknesses, but also its successes, based on the recognition that, given the state of the educational system today, we have an obligation to reform it.

[PRESENCIA] Many analysts indicate that without large economic investment, the rural standard of living will not improve. How will resources be generated and directed and how will the scale of production of the small farmers be increased if the market is still small?

[Martha Garcia] The first market is the rural one, consumption. Our basic objective is to cover the needs of the rural population, and our purpose is to increase production.

[PRESENCIA] How will the channeling of resources to the rural areas be organized?

[Martha Garcia] I believe that the level of local organization is basic, basic, that is, direct communal participation from diagnosis to problem resolution.

That means becoming involved in the peasant economy through productive infrastructure. That leads us to prioritizing the expansion of irrigated land. I am speaking of small projects ranging from rehabilitating irrigation ditches watering between 10 and 60 hectares, to medium projects covering up to 200 hectares. We will follow up implementation of agricultural and livestock programs with technical support, to permit substantial improvement in living conditions and ensure at least increased cash for those communities.

The good thing about irrigation systems is that they coordinate different ecological levels. Normally, seed production is carried out at high ecological levels, while irrigation systems are built in the valleys. This means that improved seeds will be produced simultaneously in the high zones and planted in the valley zones, and thus production levels will be improved.

[PRESENCIA] Will the money be given as credit or donation?

[Martha Garcia] Most of the resources have to come to this country in the form of donation. But they will serve to create a provincial rotating fund that will permit lending for production purposes. It will be a credit that will be managed locally, and we will seek for it to be gradually rotated into a seed bank, which will also be locally managed and administered, which will set an example for saving in the community.

[PRESENCIA] Will access to this type of supply be through the community, cooperatives, or families?

[Martha Garcia] Community. But within the community individuals, that is, the family, will be respected. Experience shows that both institutions must co-exist: the community, as a level of social control, administration and investment monitoring, and the family, which must ensure efficiency in managing the crops and their relationship with the community.

We are speaking of social capitalization, because if the community administers the resources, it should also monitor a level of guaranteed returns, returns that must lead to the generation of surpluses (even if minimum), which can be converted into social capital for the community.

In summary, the rotating fund is a credit that normally would be handled in cash. For example, agricultural and

livestock warehouses that will initially be co-administered with the community, but which the latter must prepare, and in the future they can administer those resources on their own, while simultaneously acquiring the ability to resolve problems and provide services for production.

[PRESENCIA] Does this mean repeating the experience of the Peasant Agricultural Corporation (Coraca)?

[Martha Garcia] No. Coraca was administered from the city, not by the community, and it failed because there was no resolution on the part of the community, particularly in the management of its resources.

What is now being proposed is to establish cooperation in managing the provincial economy, to make it possible for investment to be defined by the community; that is, for the community to make the request, which will be satisfied through a very well-structured organization within the community, which must exercise social control and have a good level of administration and technology, because it must monitor the management and permanence of those resources. If there is no regular return on investment within the community, then one can only with great difficulty speak of a structural resolution to communal problems.

[PRESENCIA] The Secretariat of Provincial and Rural Development is also responsible for relations with peasant organizations. Is it carrying out that activity?

[Martha Garcia] I can say that relations with the peasants and Indians will be much more efficient. Until now, there have been only political relations, which have ignored the peasant and Indian bases.

Our proposal is to develop relations with the structured bases in the sector with respect to the subcentrals and centrals. The activities will be more direct in the areas where they are located: there will be a more concrete relationship that will resolve all claims that previously were normally handled by hierarchical petitions through the peasant structures.

Areas of Extreme Poverty

[PRESENCIA] The plan submitted by your Secretariat proposes to serve 60 provinces....

[Martha Garcia] In principle that would be the number, but now we intend to cover 80, because the President requested that we serve all rural provinces, except for the department capitals and the 12 that are under the attention of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock--which reports to the Ministry of Finance—which intends to convert them to intermediate cities. Thus, we will serve 80 of the 108 provinces throughout the country, and approximately 300 sections.

[PRESENCIA] What time frames have been defined?

[Martha Garcia] Based on different studies, we have determined that approximately 35 provinces already have development proposals. Of the 35, 14 already have organized activities and their proposals for provincial development are already advanced. First, we will attend to those 14, and in 1994, to 24.

These provinces are in every department except Pando, which has none at that level of organization.

[PRESENCIA] Where are the most depressed areas of the country?

[Martha Garcia] Several studies of the poverty levels in the provinces show that most provinces are at a level of poverty or extreme poverty.

[PRESENCIA] There is the impression that the standards of living are higher in the east.

[Martha Garcia] Yes, but there are exceptions. For example, on a scale of 1 to 100, the Ichilo region rates 77; Sandoval, 60; but Abuna is at 1 and is one of the poorest in the country. Elsewhere, Tapacari has 3; Chayanta 8, and so on.

Inefficiency of Contacts Only at Government Headquarters

Among its mandates, the Secretariat for Provincial and Rural Development has that of "expanding the relationship between rural inhabitants and the authorities at all levels." That means, among other activities, communicating with the peasant union leaders and agreeing with them on different proposals to carry out.

Martha Garcia recognizes that "up to now we have discussed only the formation of the Secretariat with the leaders of the General Trade Union Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB), which initially accepted it, but we have not laid out definitions. Once the proposal is finished, it will be necessary to discuss it with them, as well as the Secretariat's strategy."

She says, however, that the dialogue was developed with the organization that until this week was headed by Paulino Guarachi. But, she comments, "not only in the CSUTCB, but also in the Nationalist Confederation, different political parties are represented, the UCS [Solidarity Civic Union], MNR [Nationalist Revolutionary Movement], etc., and dealing with so many interlocutors here, at government headquarters, is not the most efficient and effective way. So, it is rather at the level of the union centrals, which are the intermediate entities, and the departmental federations, with whom we are trying to arrive at an agreement and jointly define what the strategies will be, because activities now are joint efforts, and are not just on the part of the Secretariat."

The Potato, Symbol of the Crisis in the Countryside

One product exemplifying the crisis Bolivian peasants are experiencing is the potato. This product, originally from these zones and constituting the main dietary product, is now in a process of genetic degeneration.

Martha Garcia explains that low potato production goes back to 1983-84, when there was a severe drought with "rather serious results, forcing the peasants to harvest so intensely that subsequently "there was overproduction of potato, because for other products, the harvest was truly disastrous. But now one cannot even overproduce potatoes. That is, the genetic material in the seeds has deteriorated to such an extent that it has disappeared from almost 60 percent of the community."

This means, says Martha Garcia, that "there is no guarantee in the producing communities of their basic foods, which are potato and corn."

Thus, she adds, "our greatest concern is to gradually recover this product and try to ensure that the communities can basically produce for their own sustenance. The average current potato yield nationally is 4.5 tons per hectare, compared to a potential average of 20 tons, and the production from a 1/4-hectare parcel can easily be calculated. Thus, one of our objectives is to increase potato production from 4.5 to 5.6 tons per hectare."

Exports and Small Farms

The current hegemonic trend is to insert ourselves into the international market in a competitive fashion, which among other things, means increasing export levels.

This has two direct effects in rural areas: one, the increasing importance of agro-industrial enterprises that produce for export, and two, those who work for these companies are converted into agricultural workers.

But most of the peasant population simultaneously maintains its traditions and forms of production, limited by the expansion of small holdings.

Given that reality, Martha Garcia says that the Secretariat for Rural and Provincial Development "will try to consolidate and resolve the problems of the small landowner. Issues of salaried agricultural workers will pass over to the Ministry of Labor, because they involve labor relationships."

And with respect to small farmers, Garcia explains that this is a structural problem, which "may be resolved only with great difficulty. Surely this problem will be included in the Agriculture Law, in which tenancy and land ownership issues will be defined. What we will do will be to work with those small farmers to ensure them a level of productivity and food subsistence."

Brazil

Article Views President's 'Rebelliousness'

PY0301171094 Sao Paulo ISTOE in Portuguese 22 Dec 93 pp 22, 25

[Article by Luciano Suassuna and Daniel Stycer with the "cooperation" of Raymundo Costa from Brasilia, Otavio Lage and Sonia Neri from Belo Horizonte, and Francisco Alves Filho from Rio de Janeiro]

[Text] On 9 December, President Itamar Franco left Brasilia in a bout of rebelliousness. During his time in Rio de Janeiro and Juiz de Fora, Franco demonstrated his mercurial temperament by assailing journalists, cancelling speeches, bypassing official security procedures, and commenting to his friends that he wants to quit the presidency and settle down in Minas Gerais. Unlike former President Jose Sarney [1985-90], Franco does not like the ritual of the presidency—the set of formalities with which the president must necessarily comply. He made a point of displaying this over the past 10 days. As one of Franco's aides noted: "He likes to be treated like an ordinary citizen."

How can a president behave like an ordinary citizen or overlook the damage this may cause the country at an especially delicate moment? During the same week that Franco insisted on behaving like an ordinary citizen, the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Supreme Court removed those guilty of corruption from office. The Legislative and Judicial Branches thus recovered part of the credibility they had lost. The president's trip to Rio de Janeiro and Juiz de Fora was seen in Brasilia as a lack of interest in power. "The Executive Branch must exhibit an element of peace in the institutions," said Luis Eduardo Magalhaes (BA) [Bahia], the PFL [Liberal Front Party] leader in the Chamber of Deputies. Franco was holed up meanwhile at the Gloria Hotel in Rio de Janeiro avoiding his main official duty at this juncture, namely to negotiate the passing of Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso's economic package in Congress. He did discharge some less important duties, such as installing two new ministers—Social Security Minister Sergio Cutolo and Culture Minister Luiz Nascimento Silva. These appointments do not seem to have been preceded by substantial politico-partisan negotiations. He also met Deputy Roberto Freire (PPS-PE) [People's Socialist Party-Pernambuco], who resigned as government leader in the Chamber of Deputies because he disagreed with the economic plan. Free from the rigid structure of rules and protocol at Planalto Palace, the president ate pizza in the early hours in Rio de Janeiro and played piano during the evening in Juiz de Fora. Thus began one of the most astonishing weeks in his 15 months at the head of the presidency.

Franco arrived in Rio de Janeiro on 9 December. The following day he participated in a ceremony at the War College. Before sunset he left the Gloria Hotel on his first rebellious foray of the week. Accompanied by Minister Mauro Durante, secretary general of the Presidency, and his nephew Ariosto Franco, the president took to the road. After a nearly two-hour drive he arrived at his apartment on Rio Branco Avenue in downtown Juiz de Fora. By virtue of his post, these trips must be made by plane, the presidential plane, or by car—an official car in a motorcade. The government delegation, meanwhile, remained at the Gloria Hotel.

The absence of an armed escort for the head of state was instrumental in causing the first major incident of his weekend. Franco left his apartment of Juiz de Fora at 1600 local time on 12 December to visit his former mother-in-law, Zila, some 10 km from downtown Juiz de Fora. Realizing he was being followed by the press, Franco ordered the driver of his Monza car to go faster. The driver ran a red light. Arriving at his destination, Franco kicked the car door open. He lunged at reporters, snatching the camera parasol of Rede Bandeirantes Television and grabbing the flash from an O GLOBO photographer. "Have you no respect for others?" growled the head of state. "Please clear off, this is private property," he added.

This was Franco's second incident with the press in Juiz de Fora. On All Souls' Day, he charged at a Rede Globo Television cameraman filming Franco's visit to the tomb of his mother, Italia Cauterio Franco. According to Ceara Governor Ciro Gomes (PSDB) [Brazilian Social Democracy Party]: "This behavior shows he is a tortured man," adding: "There is no excuse for this behavior." Politicians have always been aware of the president's oscillating behavior. But he has never exhibited it with such force as he did over the last few days, thus increasing the number of those who fear a disruption in the democratic system of government and those who fear Franco will resign. During an improvised news conference, Franco told journalists: "If we manage to weather these three coming months (until the end of March, by which time presidential candidacies will have been defined) in democracy, respecting the Constitution, and if I manage to hand over power to my successor, I will be satisfied with myself." The fact that the president included democracy in his conditional sentence strengthens the conviction of those who exemplify the idea of sutlers.

According to a group of friends and politicians, the fear the president may resign—which could trigger an institutional rupture—is also based on other indications. A friend of the president from Brasilia said: "I talk with him every day and he always says he is tired and going home." Franco talked about this issue the week before he went to Rio de Janeiro. His friend from Brasilia made the following interpretation: "It does not necessarily mean resignation but these are the real feelings of a man tired of power who lacks a private life." His resignation is, however, possible. In his political career, Franco resigned only once, when he left the presidency of a CPI [Congressional Investigating Committee] on nuclear energy under the Geisel administration. Every other time he held public office, with the exception of one of the two times he was prefect of Juiz de Fora, he talked about resigning every time he faced a crisis. During the electoral campaign, he threatened to leave Collor's electoral ticket three times. During the presidency he talked about it when he completed one year in office. In an interview, he admitted he was thinking of resigning. Doubting that it was possible, leading politicians checked the Constitution to find the legal alternatives to a presidential resignation. Deputy Nelson Jobim (PMDB-RS) [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party—Rio Grande do Sul] was asked by military advisers about this possibility. The Constitution establishes that Congress must indirectly choose a name to complete the Collor/Franco presidential term. In the Chamber of Deputies, some deputies already have their candidates, among them, Senator Jarbas Passarinho (PPR-PA) [Progressive Renewal Party—Parana Sate].

This is not the first time—and will not be the last—that the president has shown his lack of patience with the job and his inability to move the pieces of the political game at a time when Congress is weak. Two months ago when deputies and senators installed the budget CPI, Franco told them he would not oppose an agreement to hold early elections. The governor of Ceara, surprised by the president's remarks, returned early from Washington—where he signed agreements with the Inter-American Development Bank—to meet Franco. The governor suggested that Franco should fill the political vacuum created by the accusations against congressmen. "Better not," said Franco, "it may seem opportunistic."

For a group of the president's direct advisers, his apathy has become an undeniable element. For example, the week the budget scandal emerged, Franco prepared a 12-page speech that was to have been delivered on radio and television network for 18 minutes. One individual involved in this project said: "It was a speech to fill the institutional vacuum." The president would have said: "The people have ethical values," unlike some deputies and senators involved in the accusations. Franco also was to have talked about education and other projects. One adviser said: "He cancelled the speech because he was afraid of touching members of the government." Two of his ministers were on the list to be investigated. Following this first cancellation, the president cancelled two other speeches.

In a week characterized by Franco's outspoken behavior, the government also revealed its lack of political course because of what the president did not say. In Rio, for example, Franco canceled his participation in the ceremony to award swords to the Naval School marines on 20 December. It was officially said that the president's presence would not be necessary. The truth is that Franco did not attend because he had prepared a dramatic speech calling for a moderation of radical political positions. Franco feared that his speech during a military ceremony would be interpreted as something coordinated with the position expressed by the Army chief of staff the week before. Franco was unaware beforehand of the speech by General Benedito Leonel, who referred to political issues.

His absence at the military ceremony seems to have contributed to calming things down after the crisis that emerged the week before. By issuing only a simple declaration supporting the finance minister since the

economic plan was announced two weeks ago, the president cooperated with the criticisms made of the economic team. Under pressure from the lack of political support from Planalto Palace, Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso already is thinking of carrying out the stages of the plan ahead of time. For example, he could introduce the URV [Real Value Unit] on 1 January, 30 days before the initial date. Economist Edmar Bracha, the minister's special adviser, told a friend in confidence that he has become the main target of criticisms of the plan, and that he may leave the government next month.

According to the presidential advisers, the president's desire to resign reportedly came from a double disappointment in addition to complaints from his family. In the political field, he reportedly is disappointed with several people he knows whose names are being investigated by the budget CPI. In the economic field, Franco reportedly realized that nothing else remains for him to do except support Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso's economic plan. "Fire him to do what?" asked Franco during a recent conversation with a congressman. He admitted: "I don't have much time." For example, Franco disagrees with the dollarization proposed by the minister and does not want to suggest breaking up oil and telecommunications monopolies in a constitutional reform. Therefore, he had to swallow the two measures.

"I am personally against breaking up those monopolies, but I will not oppose the measure if Fernando Henrique Cardoso proposes it," Franco told journalists accompanying him to Brasao restaurant in Juiz de Fora, where he had dinner at 0100 on Friday after his speech at the Viana College graduation ceremony at his daughter Georgiana's graduation from law school. The family complaints come from the president's two daughters: Fabiana and Georgiana. During his conversation with journalists at the Brasao restaurant, the president was asked to request Faviana's opinion, as an economist, about her father's government. "Her comments are unpublishable," Franco said. "This is why I have a sociologist instead of an economist at the Finance Ministry." Both daughters demand more attention. They have been to Brasilia only twice since their father took power. On one of those occasions the president complained about not being advised of his daughter's visit in time and because he was afraid his private life would be exposed.

The most curious episode revealing Itamar Franco's rebellious attitude took place on Tuesday night. According to Attorney Jose De Castro, president of Telerj [Rio de Janeiro Telephone Company], Franco told his security guards at bedtime that he would not leave the Gloria Hotel. The protection plan was deactivated and only one guard stayed in the 10th-floor corridor. At around 0100, Itamar Franco told the security officer he would go to Mauro Durante's room. But it was a lie. The president went to the lobby, where he met Castro. The couple walked past two cameramen sleeping in the entrance and went out. Franco jumped into Jose de Castro's car and drove toward the pizza parlor in Botafogo. Franco ordered a tomato and cheese pizza and drank two beers. Castro ate a tomato, cheese, and ham pizza and drank four beers. They were not bothered, not even by the couple kissing each other at one of the tables. "There was no one around us. I believe the youngsters doubted the president could have escaped from his hotel to eat pizza," Jose de Castro said amusedly. "We left the pizza parlor at 0230 and returned to the Gloria Hotel," Castro added.

Less than 48 hours later the president repeated the scene at a Juiz de Fora restaurant. Twice after participating in his daughter's graduation ceremony Franco walked to the piano where professor Maria Tereza Laidersnaider, from the Music Conservatory, was playing classical and romantic music, cheering up the night at the Brasao Restaurant. At the end Franco played together with the professor. He is convinced of the success of changing habits and might repeat the experience in the coming weeks. "Many people complained that he stayed in Brasilia too much," Jose De Castro said. "Now he has gone to Rio de Janeiro and he will return." The Gloria Hotel presidential suite has 500 square meters, five rooms, a dining room, a sitting room, a bar, and a support kitchen. The walls are decorated with French silk, the sheets are of special linen, and towels are hand embroidered. The official cost is 50,600 cruzeiros a day. Besides increasing his visits to Rio de Janeiro, Franco's friends intend to work out a visit abroad. The official purpose would be unimportant because the real purpose would be to give Franco some 20 days of rest.

Whenever he has to have a tete-a-tete with somebody, President Franco sits down on the person's right and stretches his neck up a little. This is an old habit of his that goes back to the time when he ran for governor of Minas Gerais in 1986. He told his friends then that he could not hear very well. During the election campaign in 1989, he began wearing a tiny hearing aid, strategically hidden under locks of hair, to be able to face the election marathon. The hearing aid disappeared after delicate microsurgery in Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of 1990. "His hearing is normal and is being checked by audiometric tests," states the president's physician at Planalto Palace, Carlos Alberto Farias.

Besides this hearing deficiency, which has been totally overcome now, the president's health does not have major problems other than the ones common among 62-year-old people who have an exacting work schedule and high stress levels. The control of cholesterol levels, which is also common among people his age, obliges the president to follow a spartan diet. Franco takes vitamins A, B, and C, besides capsules of a vitamin complex recommended for people his age, in order to prevent possible stress crises. When he was a senator, Franco had hepatitis-A, which left him with a liver condition.

The overtaxing situations the president has to confront by virtue of the post he holds do not affect him clinically. But they clearly disturb him emotionally, as noticed by

some of his friends from Juiz de Fora and Brasilia. One of them says: "In private, he has never been different from the way he is at Planalto Palace." "Itamar has always been very insecure and prone to outbursts of anger. Sometimes he argued with me on account of the most insignificant thing and the next day he behaved as if nothing had happened," says Lisle Lucena, with the authority of somebody who had a love affair with the president for four years. Franco is a veritable romantic in his dealings with women. He cannot restrain his jealousy, he writes poems, and sends roses on special events. Lucena comments that Franco did not want to become "emotionally involved" with his girlfriends.

"That was the case with me; with Eleonora, Senator Jarbas Passarinho's daughter; and even with his former wife, Anna Elisa, who asked for a divorce because Franco did not share anything with her," Lucena said.

His usual comment: "I wish I could change everything for a net and a straw cigar," repeatedly mentioned by the president as the subject of jokes by many, including some of his old friends. "He is of Casa Jose Silva's type. Take three and pay for two," jokes a Juiz de Fora legislator. At parties, he hates to be called president and when someone makes the mistakes of calling him that he begs: "Please, call me Itamar."

Franco gives Palacio da Alvorada employees the same provincial treatment and rejects the most human temptations. He detests shrimp, lobster, and codfish. He loves Minas Gerais cheese and never rejects a Campari—his only alcoholic concession besides the traditional draft beer in Juiz de Fora's bars. He is a real frustration to gourmets because of these gastronomic restrictions. His private cook, Helio Antion Alves, is lauded only when he cooks chicken with okra or bug bear Minas' style. "He only likes the usual steak with rice, beans, and cold sweet potatoes," complains Alves. Every morning the cook and housekeeper Raimunda Teles prepare the indispensable presidential vitamin composed of papaya and orange.

The habit of leaving at the most inappropriate moments is explained by Franco in a simple way. "I am like a bird who does not sing when he changes. I need privacy and isolation," he told a friend after scaring off the photographers in front of his former mother-in-law's home in Juiz de Fora on 12 December. "The day we started dating he was surprised when I asked him about his car. He went to pick me up on foot and we ended up going out in my Volkswagen," Lisle commented. When his former girlfriend did not want to drive and the couple could not go out, Franco would say: "Then we can sit on the sidewalk and talk."

Drug Traffickers Invade Police Precinct, Rescue Inmates

PY0301191794 Rio de Janeiro Rede Globo Television in Portuguese 1500 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] The largest criminal organization in the country conducted a demonstration of force early this morning. In a bold operation, 30 drug traffickers of the Red Brigade invaded the Engenho Novo Police Precinct in Rio de Janeiro and rescued 38 inmates from the cells.

[Begin unidentified reporter recording] The gang closed 24 de Mayo Street, one of the busiest in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. The group comprised 30 men, armed with rifles and machine guns, who wore civilian police vests. The seven detectives who were in the precinct were taken prisoner and handcuffed. The gang opened cells and released the 38 inmates. The gang took all the weapons from the police precinct and even used a police vehicle to escape. A man who was riding a motorcycle in the area was beaten. Within 30 minutes, more than 100 policemen had begun the search for the gang. The shantytowns of surrounding areas were cordoned off, but only two inmates were recaptured. Another inmate was found dead in a street close to the precinct. He was a police informer who was murdered by the gang.

The police knew that the order to take over the police precinct came from drug trafficker Atlas Ferreira, aka Adam, one of the principal Red Brigade chiefs and a drug trafficking leader in the Vigario General shantytown. The police believe the main objective was to rescue one of the gang leaders, Luiz Carlos Goncalvez who has been sentenced for homicide, assault, and kidnapping, and who was to be transferred to a high security prison today. The police were impressed with the boldness of the gang. As they left, they fired shots in all directions leaving marks on the walls and scaring the neighborhood. One shot entered the window of the house next to the precinct. [end recording]

Chile

Ambassador to Moscow Returns, Offers Resignation

PY0401011094 Santiago Radio Cooperativa Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Text] Chilean Ambassador to Moscow James Holger said Chilean trade with Russia might increase through the sale of wines to that country. The diplomat returned to the country due to health problems and took advantage of the opportunity to place his resignation at the government's disposal. Regarding our bilateral relations with Russia and the possibilities of increasing trade, Holger said prospects are good and we are working together with Chilean entrepreneurs in this area. Holger pointed out the recent signing of contracts with the Corpora firm for the sale of instant coffee and powdered juice, adding that other nontraditional industries such as the shoe industry also are working to enter the Russian market. Good Chilean grape juice also will be tried on federation tables, James Holger said:

[Begin recording] I had a meeting with Felipe Benavente, Santa Rita vineyard's sales manager, in Moscow just before leaving. His visit was very successful. We have very good chances of placing high-quality table wine in

St. Petersburg and Moscow supermarkets and four- and five-star hotels. At a time markets for our wine are shrinking elsewhere, the Russian market offers good opportunities, not spectacularly good, but good nonetheless. [end recording]

Regarding the internal political situation, Holger said it is complex and difficult:

[Begin recording] The situation is in a permanent state of change. It is not known where things are going sometimes. The economic reform plan is going ahead, stumbling ahead I would say, but it is proceeding. I do not think there will be a return to the past as many people fear. What might happen is a slowing down of the reform process, which was perhaps implemented with excessive zeal. The parliamentary election was clean. Thousands of foreign observers saw what happened. [end recording]

Mistakes were made when implementing the policy to transform the country from a centralized economy to a market economy. Excessive emphasis was placed on monetary aspects, Holger said, adding that at present the trend is to work more on social programs.

Colombia

Governor Assures Agreement Limits U.S. Troop Activities

PA0301162994 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1227 GMT 3 Jan 94

[Telephone interview with Valle del Cauca Department Governor Carlos Holguin Sarti by announcer Dario Arizmendi; from "Caracol's 0600 to 0900" newscast—live]

[Text] [Arizmendi] We now welcome Valle del Cauca Governor Carlos Holguin Sarti. We wish you a happy new year, Governor. We want to ask you—indeed, this is the purpose of our call—a question: Do you know whether all of the U.S. Marines have arrived at Bahia Malaga, and when will they begin the community projects that the U.S. Embassy says the Marines will carry out?

[Holguin] First, allow me to restate my best wishes for 1994 to you and all the Caracol journalists and contributors, and particularly to your large audience. I hope this year is beautiful and good, and I hope the best for everyone this year.

Referring to the U.S. troops' presence in Bahia Malaga, Juanchaco and Ladrilleros, I understand only the so-called advance platoon has arrived—some 13 men. I believe this is the correct number. They will... [pauses] they are currently involved in preparing the camp that will house the remaining 130 men, who, if I am not mistaken, should arrive on 4 or 5 January.

[Arizmendi] Do you not receive information on the U.S. troops' mobilization?

[Holguin] [Bahia Malaga Naval Base Commander] Rear Admiral [Jose Ignacio] Rozo was kind enough to inform me. He kept me informed about their arrival, but we have had no further contact over the weekend.

[Arizmendi] Governor, do you really believe they will engage in community work, or are they coming with ulterior motives—of a police nature, perhaps?

[Holguin] That is what the document signed between the national government and the U.S. Government states. One cannot mistrust... [pauses] if one cannot trust the word, much less can we mistrust an official document signed by the government. [sentence as heard] There is something else: They are restricted to operating exclusively in the zone of Juanchaco and Ladrilleros, which is an isolated and solitary area which cannot be reached except by sea. Access is difficult, and there have never been drug trafficking operations there, nor do we know about the existence of laboratories and crops. Furthermore, the climate is not appropriate for this type of activity. Well, this makes it easy to see that they are coming only and exclusively for what the document or agreement between the two governments states.

[Arizmendi] Mr. Governor, does this mean the violent criticism issued by certain Valle del Cauca and national groups concerning the U.S. troops' presence is groundless?

[Holguin] I believe this was given too much prominence. I said since the beginning that someone tried to make a mountain out of a molehill. I understand this perfectly well, and I said so. I added that I considered the troops' arrival untimely because it coincided with statements made by the U.S. ambassador following Pablo Escobar's death. He said things would continue against Cali; that a war should be unleashed here, etc., etc. This, well... [pauses] obviously, this not only alerted the people, but it also coincided with the troops' arrival. It was natural and logical for the people to react the way they did.

Nevertheless, I reassert what I have already said: The document outlines what they have come to do. We also are remaining alert to make sure they are restricted to the zone, as the document also states; do not carry weapons; and carry out their work. Among other things, they have a very short time to carry out their work, because they are scheduled to leave the country on 28 February.

[Arizmendi] Excuse me, Governor. Nevertheless, criticism from all of the political groups has continued because of the presence of these U.S. soldiers and engineers. For example, the M-19 [19 April Movement/ Democratic Alliance] filed administrative and procedural charges against President Cesar Gaviria with the

Attorney General's Office because, it claims, he violated the Constitution when he failed to consult Congress or the State Council about the troops' presence in our country.

[Holguin] Well, I cannot... [pauses] I have no authority to pass judgment on the requisites and precepts that the Constitution and law establish for the national government to abide by in this type of operation. I understand these operations have been carried out based on treaties signed by the country many years ago. Moreover, they have been carried out every so often, on a regular basis, in different parts of national territory.

I have personally attended the so-called Unitas Operation on several occasions. This is a joint operation between the U.S. Navy, the Ecuadoran Navy, and the Colombian Navy. I believe it is held every year or every two years in Colombian territorial waters and in the Pacific Ocean. I think they are—how can I say it?—operations foreseen in international treaties that have been duly signed, ratified, and approved by Congress. Nevertheless, that does not fall within my purview, and I do not have enough information or data on this. I suppose the national government has obviously abided by all the precepts of the Constitution and the law.

Ecuador

Roundup of Economic Developments Through 3 Jan

PA0301220494

[Editorial Report] The following is a compilation of reports on Ecuadoran economic developments monitored through 3 January 1994. Source is cited in parentheses following each item.

The 1994 general state budget is 6 trillion sucres, 1 trillion of which is earmarked to pay the Ecuadoran foreign debt. The price per barrel of oil is estimated at $13. (Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 28 Dec 93)

An official report from the Institute of Statistics and Census indicates that the inflation rate for 1993 was approximately 31 percent compared to more than 60 percent at the end 1992. Prices increased 0.57 percent in December compared to 1.63 percent in November and 1.59 percent in December 1992. (Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 30 Dec 93)

Peru

President Promotes 23 Army Colonels to General

PA0301150094 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2159 GMT 2 Jan 94

[Text] Lima, 2 Jan (EFE)—The Peruvian Army has 23 new generals as of Sunday, after President Alberto Fujimori approved their promotions. The promotions were established by special resolutions issued and signed by Fujimori and published today in the official gazette EL PERUANO. The 23 colonels to be promoted to brigadier general come from special areas such as infantry, artillery, cavalry, engineering, communications and the judge advocate's office.

The Peruvian president also promoted seven generals to division generals, the highest rank in the Army. These soldiers are Tomas Cavero, Jose Picon, Juan Leon, Enrique Torrico, Napoleon Vasquez, Andres Sanchez, and Guido Guevara. Rear Admirals Jose Texeira, Enrique Salomon, and Americo Ibarcena were promoted to vice admiral, the highest rank in the Peruvian Navy. Major Generals Cesar Urday, Ernesto Burga and Luis Moy were promoted to liuetenant general, the highest rank in the Peruvian Air Force.

All these promotions were confirmed by presidential resolutions and published in the official gazette. The promotions are consistent with the new Constitution, which went into effect on 31 December 1993. It states that the promotions of high-ranking officers of the Armed Forces are to be confirmed by the president after each branch of the Armed Forces presents its recommendations. The old Constitution stated that promotions were to be confirmed by the legislature upon a recommendation sent by the Executive Branch.

The political opposition criticized the constitutional change because they believed this undermined legislative authority and allowed for "politicking" with the military institutions. The opposition magazine CARETAS said in December that the military High Command and General Nicolas de Bari Hermoza, the commander in chief of the Army and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had decided on the promotions themselves, adding that the "politicizing and counter-institutionalization in the Army has had devastating effects." Peruvian opposition parties view Hermoza as a negative factor within the Army, and they have requested his removal on several occasions. All of the requests were rejected by Fujimori.

Hermoza is considered to be the Peruvian president's closest military ally after he backed Fujimori's self-inflicted coup d'etat on 5 April 1992, when the president dissolved the parliament, closed down the Judicial Branch, and assumed full power.

Roundup of Economic Developments Through 3 Jan

PA0301215494

[Editorial Report] The following is a compilation of reports on Peruvian economic developments monitored

through 3 January 1994. Source is cited in parentheses following each item.

On 28 December the Economy and Finance Ministry approved an agreement to reduce the foreign debt and create a fund. In accordance with the agreement, which was signed on 17 December by the Peruvian and Swiss Governments, Switzerland will pardon the debt—worth over 196 million Swiss francs—so part of the money can be used for aid and development programs. (Lima Global de Television Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 29 Dec 93)

The Peruvian Energy and Mines Ministry reported on 30 December that in 1994 the proven hydrocarbon reserves will increase by 10 percent, thus reaching 420 million barrels, in accordance with the results of drilling done in 1993. The data indicate that production increased by 9 percent compared to average production for 1992. The report also states that mining increased by 4.5 percent compared to 1992, and that the production of all important metals increased, except silver production, which dropped by 2.3 percent. The report adds that gold production increased by 3.9 percent in August and 10.8 percent in November. (Hamburg DPA in Spanish 1648 GMT 30 Dec 93)

Venezuela

Rival Gangs Clash in Sabaneta Jail; 100 Killed

PA0401040494 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 2350 GMT 3 Jan 94

[From "The News" newscast]

[Text] One hundred people were killed at the Sabaneta Jail in Maracaibo as a result of a shooting inside the prison on 2 January; in addition, the inmates torched two cell blocks this afternoon, and shots were heard during the confusion.

[Begin recording] [Defense Minister Radames Munoz] According to the latest conversation I had with General Rojas, who is handling the situation, the National Guard has the prison under control. He also informed me that there are approximately 100 deaths, and the search is continuing under the rubble, as the inmates burned two cell blocks. The search continues for more dead bodies.

[Unidentified reporter] Did fire cause the deaths?

[Munoz] Some inmates died in the fire; others were stabbed or died in the shooting, and some drowned. Rival gangs clashed and some drowned in the water tanks, while others were burned or stabbed to death. [end recording]

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